
SHAKESPEARE'S

KING JOHN

Hudson



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SHAKESPEARE'S
HISTORY OF KING JOHN.

WITH

INTRODUCTION, AND NOTES EXPLANATORY AND CRITICAL.

FOR USE IN SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES.

BY THE

REV. HENRY N. HUDSON, LL.D.



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TO TEACHERS.



HOW TO USE SHAKESPEARE IN SCHOOL.

AS I have long been in frequent receipt of letters asking for advice or suggestions as to the best way of using Shakespeare in class, I have concluded to write out and print some of my thoughts on that subject. On one or two previous occasions, I have indeed moved the theme, but only, for the most part, incidentally, and in subordinate connection with other topics, never with any thing like a round and full exposition of it.

And in the first place I am to remark, that in such a matter no one can make up or describe, in detail, a method of teaching for another: in many points every teacher must strike out his or her own method; for a method that works very well in one person's hands may nevertheless fail entirely in another's. Some general reasons or principles of method, together with a few practical hints of detail, is about all that I can undertake to give; this too rather with a view to setting teachers' own minds at work in devising ways, than to marking out any formal course of procedure.

In the second place, here, as elsewhere, the method of teaching is to be shaped and suited to the particular purpose in hand; on the general principle, of course, that the end is to point out and prescribe the means. So, if the purpose

be to make the pupils in our public schools Shakespearians in any proper sense of the term, I can mark out no practicable method for the case, because I hold the purpose itself to be utterly impracticable ; one that cannot possibly be carried out, and ought not to be, if it could. I find divers people talking and writing as if our boys and girls were to make a knowledge of Shakespeare the chief business of their life, and were to gain their living thereby. These have a sort of cant phrase current among them, about "knowing Shakespeare in an eminent sense" ; and they are instructing us that, in order to this, we must study the English language historically, and acquire a technical mastery of Elizabethan idioms.

Now, to know Shakespeare in an eminent sense, if it means any thing, must mean, I take it, to become Shakespearians, or become eminent in the knowledge of Shakespeare ; that is to say, we must have such a knowledge of Shakespeare as can be gained only by making a special and continuous, or at least very frequent, study of him through many long years. So the people in question seem intent upon some plan or program of teaching whereby the pupils in our schools shall come out full-grown Shakespearians ; this too when half-a-dozen, or perhaps a dozen, of the Poet's plays is all they can possibly find time for studying through. And to this end, they would have them study the Poet's language historically, and so draw out largely into his social, moral, and mental surroundings, and ransack the literature of his time ; therewithal they would have their *Shakespeare Grammars* and *Shakespeare Lexicons*, and all the apparatus for training the pupils in a sort of learned verbalism, and in analyzing and parsing the Poet's sentences.

Now I know of but three persons in the whole United

States who have any just claim to be called Shakespearians, or who can be truly said to know Shakespeare in an eminent sense. Those are, of course, Mr. Grant White, Mr. Howard Furness, and Mr. Joseph Crosby. Beyond this goodly trio, I cannot name a single person in the land who is able to go alone, or even to stand alone, in any question of textual criticism or textual correction. For that is what it is to be a Shakespearian. And these three have become Shakespearians, not by the help of any labour-saving machinery, such as special grammars and lexicons, but by spending many years of close study and hard brain-work in and around their author. Before reaching that point, they have not only had to study all through the Poet himself, and this a great many times, but also to make many excursions and sojournings in the popular, and even the erudite authorship of his period. And the work has been almost, if not altogether, a pure labour of love with them. They have pursued it with impassioned earnestness, as if they could find no rest for their souls without it.

Well, and what do you suppose the result of all this has done or is doing for them in the way of making a living? Do you suppose they can begin to purchase their bread and butter, or even so much as the bread without the butter, with the proceeds of their great learning and accomplishments in that kind? No, not a bit of it! For the necessities of life, every man of them has to depend mostly, if not entirely, on other means. If they had nothing to feed upon but what their Shakespeare knowledge brings them, they would have mighty little use for their teeth. If you do not believe this, ask the men themselves: and if they tell you it is not so, then I will frankly own myself a naughty boy, and will do penance publicly for my naughtiness. For my own poor

part, I know right well that I have no claim to be called a Shakespearian, albeit I may, perchance, have had some foolish aspirations that way. Nevertheless I will venture to say that Shakespeare work does more towards procuring a livelihood for me than for either of the gentlemen named. This is doubtless because I am far inferior to them in Shakespearian acquirement and culture. Yet, if I had nothing but the returns of my labour in that kind to live upon, I should have to live a good deal more cheaply than I do. And there would probably be no difficulty in finding persons that were not born till some time after my study of Shakespeare began, who, notwithstanding, can now outbid me altogether in any auction of bread-buying popularity. This, no doubt, is because their natural gifts and fitness for the business are so superior to mine, that they might readily be extemporized into what no length of time and study could possibly educate me.

In all this the three gentlemen aforesaid are, I presume, far from thinking they have any thing to complain of, or from having any disposition to complain; and I am certainly as far from this as they are. It is all in course, and all just right, except that I have a good deal better than I deserve. And both they and I know very well that nothing but a love of the thing can carry any one through such a work; that in the nature of things such pursuits have to be their own reward; and that here, as elsewhere, "love's not love when it is mingled with regards that stand aloof from th' entire point."

Such, then, is the course and process by which, and by which alone, men can come to know Shakespeare in any sense deserving to be called eminent. It is a process of close, continuous, life-long study. And, in order to know

the Poet in this eminent sense, one must know a good deal more of him than of any thing else ; that is to say, the pursuit must be something of a specialty with him ; unless his mind be by nature far more encyclopedic than most men's are. Then too, in the case of those who have reached this point, the process had its beginning in a deep and strong love of the subject : Shakespeare has been a passion with them, perhaps I should say the master-passion of their life : this was both the initiative impulse that set them a-going, and also the sustaining force that kept them going, in the work. Now such a love can hardly be wooed into life or made to sprout by a technical, parsing, gerund-grinding course of study. The proper genesis and growth of love are not apt to proceed in that way. A long and loving study may indeed produce, or go to seed in, a grammar or a lexicon ; but surely the grammar or the lexicon is not the thing to prompt or inaugurate the long and loving study. Or, if the study begin in that way, it will not be a study of the workmanship as poetry, but only, or chiefly, as the raw-material of lingual science ; that is to say, as a subject for verbal dissection and surgery.

If, then, any teacher would have his pupils go forth from school knowing Shakespeare in an eminent sense, he must shape and order his methods accordingly. What those methods may be, or should be, I cannot say ; but I should think they must be quite in the high-pressure line, and I more than suspect they will prove abortive, after all. And here I cannot forbear to remark that some few of us are so stuck in old-fogyism, or so fossilized, as to hold that the main business of people in this world is to gain an honest living ; and that they ought to be educated with a constant eye to that purpose. These, to be sure, look very like

self-evident propositions; axioms, or mere truisms, which, nevertheless, our education seems determined to ignore entirely, and a due application of which would totally revolutionize our whole educational system.

Now knowing Shakespeare in an eminent sense does not appear to be exactly the thing for gaining an honest living. All people but a few, a very few indeed, have, ought to have, must have, other things to do. I suspect that one Shakespearian in about five millions is enough. And a vast majority are to get their living by hand-work, not by head-work; and even with those who live by head-work Shakespeare can very seldom be a leading interest. He can nowise be the substance or body of their mental food, but only, at the most, as a grateful seasoning thereof. Thinking of his poetry may be a pleasant and helpful companion for them in their business, but cannot be the business itself. His divine voice may be a sweetening tone, yet can be but a single tone, and an undertone at that, in the chorus of a well-ordered life and a daily round of honourable toil. Of the students in our colleges not one in a thousand, of the pupils in our high schools not one in a hundred thousand, can think, or ought to think, of becoming Shakespearians. But most of them, it may be hoped, can become men and women of right intellectual tastes and loves, and so be capable of a pure and elevating pleasure in the converse of books. Surely, then, in the little time that can be found for studying Shakespeare, the teaching should be shaped to the end, not of making the pupils Shakespearians, but only of doing somewhat — it cannot be much — towards making them wiser, better, happier men and women.

So, in reference to school study, what is the use of this cant about knowing Shakespeare in an eminent sense? Why

talk of doing what no sane person can ever, for a moment, possibly think of attempting? The thing might well be passed by as one of the silliest cants that ever were canted, but that, as now often urged, it is of a very misleading and mischievous tendency ; like that other common folly of telling all our boys that they may become President of the United States. This is the plain and simple truth of the matter, and as such I am for speaking it without any sort of mincing or disguise. In my vocabulary, indeed, on most occasions I choose that a spade be simply "a spade," and not "an instrument for removing earth."

This brings me to the main point, to what may be called the heart of my message. Since any thing worthy to be termed an eminent knowledge of Shakespeare cannot possibly be gained or given in school, and could not be, even if ten times as many hours were spent in the study as can be, or ought to be, so spent, the question comes next, What, then, can be done? And my answer, in the fewest words, is this : The most and the best that we can hope to do, is to plant in the pupils, and to nurse up as far as may be, a genuine taste and love for Shakespeare's poetry. The planting and nursing of this taste is purely a matter of culture, and not of acquirement : it is not properly giving the pupils knowledge ; it is but opening the road, and starting them on the way to knowledge. And such a taste, once well set in the mind, will be, or at least stand a good chance of being, an abiding principle, a prolific germ of wholesome and improving study : moreover it will naturally proceed till, in time, it comes to act as a strong elective instinct, causing the mind to gravitate towards what is good, and to recoil from what is bad : it may end in bringing, say, one in two millions to "know Shakespeare in an eminent sense" ; but it can hardly

fail to be a precious and fruitful gain to many, perhaps to most, possibly to all.

This I believe to be a thoroughly practicable aim. And as the aim itself is practicable, so there are practicable ways for attaining it or working towards it. What these ways are or may be, I can best set forth by tracing, as literally and distinctly as I know how, my own course of procedure in teaching.

In the first place, I never have had, never will have, any recitations whatever ; but only what I call, simply, *exercises*, the pupils reading the author under my direction, correction, and explanation ; the teacher and the taught thus communing together in the author's pages for the time being. Nor do I ever require, though I commonly advise, that the matter to be read in class be read over by the pupils in private before coming to the exercise. Such preparation is indeed well, but not necessary. I am very well satisfied by having the pupils live, breathe, think, feel with the author while his words are on their lips and in their ears. As I wish to have them simply growing, or getting the food of growth, I do not care to have them making any conscious acquirement at all ; my aim thus always being to produce the utmost possible amount of *silent* effect. And I much prefer to have the classes rather small, never including more than twenty pupils ; even a somewhat smaller number is still better. Then, in Shakespeare, I always have the pupils read dramatically right round and round the class, myself calling the parts. When a speech is read, if the occasion seems to call for it, I make comments, ask questions, or have the pupils ask them, so as to be sure that they understand fairly what they are reading. That done, I call the next speech ; and so the reading and the talking proceed till the class-time is up.

In the second place, as to the nature and scope of these exercises, or the parts, elements, particulars they consist of. — In Shakespeare, the exercise is a mixed one of reading, language, and character. And I make a good deal of having the Poet's lines read properly ; this too both for the utility of it and as a choice and refined accomplishment, and also because such a reading of them greatly enhances the pleasure of the exercise both to the readers themselves and to the hearers. Here, of course, such points come in as the right pronunciation of words, the right place and degree of emphasis, the right pauses and divisions of sense, the right tones and inflections of voice. But the particulars that make up good reading are too well known to need dwelling upon. Suffice it to say, that in this part of the exercise my whole care is to have the pupils understand what they are reading, and to pronounce it so that an intelligent listener may understand it : that done, I rest content. But I tolerate nothing theatrical or declamatory or oratorical or put on for effect in the style of reading, and insist on a clean, clear, simple, quiet voicing of the sense and meaning ; no strut, no swell, but all plain and pure ; that being my notion of *tasteful* reading.

Touching this point, I will but add that Shakespeare is both the easiest and also the hardest of all authors to read properly, — the easiest because he is the most natural, and the hardest for the same reason ; and for both these reasons together he is the best of all authors for training people in the art of reading : for an art it is, and a very high one too, insomuch that pure and perfect reading is one of the rarest things in the world, as it is also one of the delightfulest. The best description of what it is that now occurs to me is in *Guy Mannering*, chapter 29th, where Julia Mannering writes

to her friend how, of an evening, her father is wont to sweeten their home and its fireside by the choice matter and the tasteful manner of his reading. And so my happy life—for it is a happy one—has little of better happiness in it than hearing my own beloved pupils read Shakespeare.

As to the language part of the exercise, this is chiefly concerned with the meaning and force of the Poet's words, but also enters more or less into sundry points of grammar, word-growth, prosody, and rhetoric, making the whole as little technical as possible. And I use, or aim to use, all this for the one sole purpose of getting the pupils to understand what is immediately before them; not looking at all to any lingual or philological purposes lying beyond the matter directly in hand. And here I take the utmost care not to push the part of verbal comment and explanation so long or so far as to become dull and tedious to the pupils. For as I wish them to study Shakespeare, simply that they may learn to understand and to love his poetry itself, so I must and will have them take pleasure in the process; and people are not apt to fall or to grow in love with things that bore them. I would much rather they should not fully understand his thought, or not take in the full sense of his lines, than that they should feel any thing of weariness or disgust in the study; for the defect of present comprehension can easily be repaired in the future, but not so the disgust. If they really love the poetry, and find it pleasant to their souls, I'll risk the rest.

In truth, average pupils do not need nearly so much of catechizing and explaining as many teachers are apt to suppose. I have known divers cases where this process was carried to a very inordinate and hurtful excess, the matter being all chopped into a fine mince-meat of items; questions and topics being multiplied to the last degree of minuteness and

tenuity. Often well-nigh a hundred questions are pressed where there ought not to be more than one or two ; the aim being, apparently, to force an *exhaustive* grammatical study of the matter. And exhaustive of the pupil's interest and patience it may well prove to be. This is not studying Shakespeare, but merely using him as an occasion for studying something else. Surely, surely, such a course "is not, nor it cannot come to, good" : it is just the way to make pupils loathe the study as an intolerable bore, and wish the Poet had never been born. The thing to be aimed at before all others is, to draw and hold the pupil's mind in immediate contact with the poetry ; and such a multitude of mincing questions and comments is just a thick wedge of tiresome obstruction and separation driven in between the two. In my own teaching, my greatest fear commonly is, lest I may strangle and squelch the proper virtue and efficacy of the Poet's lines with my own incontinent catechetical and exegetical babble.

Next, for the character part of the exercise. And here I have to say, at the start, that I cannot think it a good use of time to put pupils to the study of Shakespeare at all, until they have got strength and ripeness of mind enough to enter, at least in some fair measure, into the transpirations of character in his persons. For this is indeed the Shakespeare of Shakespeare. And the process is as far as you can think from being a mere formal or mechanical or routine handling of words and phrases and figures of speech : it is nothing less than to hear and to see the hearts and souls of the persons in what they say and do ; to feel, as it were, the very pulse-throbs of their inner life. Herein it is that Shakespeare's unapproached and unapproachable mastery of human nature lies. Nor can I bear to have his poetry

studied merely as a curious thing standing outside of and apart from the common life of man, but as drawing directly into the living current of human interests, feelings, duties, needs, occasions. So I like to be often running the Poet's thoughts, and carrying the pupils with them, right out and home to the business and bosom of humanity about them ; into the follies, vices, and virtues, the meannesses and nobilities, the loves, joys, sorrows, and shames, the lapses and grandeurs, the disciplines, disasters, devotions, and divinities, of men and women as they really are in the world. For so the right use of his poetry is, to subserve the ends of life, not of talk. And if this part be rightly done, pupils will soon learn that "our gentle Shakespeare" is not a prodigious enchanter playing with sublime or grotesque imaginations for their amusement, but a friend and brother, all alive with the same heart that is in them ; and who, while he is but little less than an angel, is also at the same time but little more than themselves ; so that, beginning where his feet are, they can gradually rise, and keep rising, till they come to be at home where his great, deep, mighty intellect is.

Such, substantially, and in some detail, is the course I have uniformly pursued in my Shakespeare classes. I have never cared to have my pupils make any show in analyzing and parsing the Poet's language, but I have cared much, very much, to have them understand and enjoy his poetry. Accordingly I have never touched the former at all, except so far as was clearly needful in order to secure the latter. And as the poetry was made for the purpose of being enjoyed, so, when I have seen the pupils enjoying it, this has been to me sufficient proof that they rightly understood it. True, I have never had, nor have I ever wanted, any available but cheap percentages of proficiency to set off my work :

perhaps my pupils have seldom had any idea of what they were getting from the study. Very well ; then it has at least not fostered conceit in them : so I wished to have it, so was glad to have it : the results I aimed at were far off in the future ; nor have I had any fear of those results failing to emerge in due time. In fact, I cleave rather fondly to the hope of being remembered by my pupils with some affection after I shall be no more ; and I know right well that the best fruits of the best mental planting have and must have a pretty long interval between the seed-time and the harvest.

Once, indeed, and it was my very first attempt, having a class of highly intelligent young ladies, I undertook to put them through a pretty severe drill in prosody : after enduring it awhile, they remonstrated with me, giving me to understand that they wanted the light and pleasure properly belonging to the study, and not the tediousness that pedantry or mere technical learning could force into it. They were right ; and herein I probably learnt more from them than they did from me. And so teaching of Shakespeare has been just the happiest occupation of my life : the wholesomest and most tonic too ; disposing me more than any other to severe and earnest thought : no drudgery in it, no dullness about it ; but “as full of spirit as the month of May,” and joyous as Wordsworth’s lark hiding himself in the light of morning, and

With a soul as strong as a mountain river
Pouring out praise to the almighty Giver.

But now certain wise ones are telling us that this is all wrong ; that teaching Shakespeare in this way is making, or tending to make, the study “an entertainment,” and so not the “noble study” that it ought to be ; meaning, I suppose,

by *noble study*, such a study as would bring the pupils to know Shakespeare in the eminent sense remarked upon before. What is this but to proceed in the work just as if the pupils were to become Shakespearians ; that is, specialists in that particular line ?

Thus they would import into this study the same false and vicious mode that has come to be used with the classics in our colleges. This mode is, to keep pegging away continually at points of grammar and etymology, so as to leave no time or thought for the sense and meaning of what is read. Thus the classical author is used merely or mainly for the purpose of teaching the grammar, not the grammar for the purpose of understanding the author. For the practical upshot of such a course is, to have the student learn what modern linguists and grammarians have compiled, not what the old Greeks and Romans thought. This hind-first or hindmost-foremost process has grown to be a dreadful nuisance in our practice, making the study of Greek and Latin inexpressibly lifeless and wearisome ; and utterly fruitless withal as regards real growth of mind and culture of taste.

Some years ago, I had a talk on this subject with our late venerable patriarch of American letters, whose only grandson had then recently graduated from college. He told me he had gathered from the young man to what a wasteful and vicious extreme the thing was carried ; and he spoke in terms of severe censure and reprobation of the custom. And so I have heard how a very learned professor one day spent the time of a whole recitation in talking about a comma that had been inserted in a Greek text ; telling the class who inserted it, and when and why he did so ; also who had since accepted it, and who had since rejected it, and when and why ; also what effect the insertion had, and what the

omission, on the sense of the passage. Now, if the students had all been predestined or predetermined specialists in Greek, this might possibly have been the right way ; but, as they were not so predestined or predetermined, the way was most certainly wrong, and a worse one could hardly have been taken. For the right course of study for those who are to be specialists in this or that pursuit is one thing ; the right course for those who cannot be, and have no thought of being, specialists is a very different thing ; and to transfer the former course to the latter class, is a most preposterous blunder, yes, and a most mischievous one too.

I have lately been given to understand that some of our best classical teachers have become sensible of this great error, and have set to work to correct it in practice. I understand also that noble old Harvard, wise in this, as in many other things, is leading the return to the older and better way. I hope most devoutly that it is so ; for the proper effect of the modern way can hardly be any other than to attenuate and chill and dwarf the student's better faculties. The thing, to be sure, has been done in the name of thoroughness ; but I believe it has proved thorough to no end but that of unsinewing the mind, and drying the sap out of it.

But now the self-same false mode that has thus run itself into the ground in classical study must, it seems, be used in the study of English authors. For so the wise ones afore-said, those who are for having everybody know Shakespeare in an eminent sense, would, apparently, have the study ennobled by continual diversions into the science of language, exercising the pupil's logical faculty, or rather his memory, with points of etymology, grammar, historical usage, &c. ; points that are, or may be made to appear, scientifically

demonstrable. Thus the thing they seem to have in view is about the same that certain positivist thinkers mean, when they would persuade us that no knowledge is really worth having but what stands on a basis of scientific demonstration, so that we not only may be certain of its truth, but cannot possibly be otherwise.

So I have somewhere read of a certain mathematician who, on reading *Paradise Lost*, made this profound criticism, that "it was a very pretty piece of work, but he did not see that it proved any thing." But, if he had studied it in the modern way of studying poetry, he would have found that divers things might be proved from it ; as, for instance, that a metaphor and a simile are at bottom one and the same thing, differing only in form, and that the author very seldom, if ever, makes use of the word *its*. And so the singing of a bird does not prove any thing scientifically ; and your best way of getting scientific knowledge about the little creature is by dissecting him, so as to find out where the music comes from, and how it is made. And so, again, what good can the flowers growing on your mother's grave do you, unless you use them as things to "peep and botanize" about, like the "philosopher" in one of Wordsworth's poems?

The study of Shakespeare an entertainment? Yes, to be sure, precisely that, if you please to call it so ; a pastime, a recreation, a delight. This is just what, in my notion of things, such a study ought to be. Why, what else should it be? It is just what I have always tried my utmost, and I trust I may say with some little success, to make the study. Shakespeare's poetry, has it not a right to be to us a perennial spring of sweetness and refreshment, a thing

Round which, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood
Our pastime and our happiness may grow ?

And so my supreme desire has been that the time spent in the study should be, to the pupils, brimful of quiet gladness and pleasantness ; and in so far as at any time it has not been so, just so far I have regarded my work as a sorry failure, and have determined to try and do better next time. What the dickens — I beg everybody's pardon — what can be the proper use of studying Shakespeare's poetry without enjoyment? Or do you suppose that any one can really delight in his poetry, without reaping therefrom the highest and purest benefit? The delectation is itself the appropriate earnest and proof that the student is drinking in — without knowing it indeed, and all the better for that — just the truest, deepest, finest culture that any poetry can give. What touches the mind's heart is apt to cause pleasure ; what merely grubs in its outskirts and suburbs is apt to be tedious and dull. Assuredly, therefore, if a teacher finds that his or her pupils, or any of them, cannot be wooed and won to take pleasure in the study of Shakespeare, then either the teacher should forthwith go to teaching something else, or the pupils should be put to some other study.

What wise and wonderful ideas our progressive oblivion of the past is putting into people's heads ! Why, it has been, from time immemorial, a settled axiom, that the proper aim of poetry is to please, of the highest poetry, to make wisdom and virtue pleasant, to crown the True and the Good with delight and joy. This is the very constituent of the poet's art ; that without which it has no adequate reason for being. To clothe the austere forms of truth and wisdom with heart-taking beauty and sweetness, is its life and law. But then it is only when poetry is read as poetry that it is bound to please. When or so far as it is studied only as grammar or logic, it has a perfect right to be unpleasant.

Of course I hold that poetry, especially Shakespeare's, ought to be read as poetry; and when it is not read with pleasure, the right grace and profit of the reading are missed. For the proper instructiveness of poetry is essentially dependant on its pleasantness; whereas in other forms of writing this order is or may be reversed. The sense or the conscience of what is morally good and right should indeed have a hand, and a prerogative hand, in shaping our pleasures; and so, to be sure, it must be, else the pleasures will needs be transient, and even the seed-time of future pains. So right-minded people ought to desire, and do desire, to find pleasure in what is right and good; the highest pleasure in what is rightest and best: nevertheless the pleasure of the thing is what puts its healing, purifying, regenerating virtue into act; and to converse with what is in itself beautiful and good without tasting any pleasantness in it, is or may be a positive harm.

But, indeed, our education has totally lost the idea of culture, and consequently has thrown aside the proper methods of it: it makes no account of any thing but acquirement. And the reason seems to be somewhat as follows:—The process of culture is silent and unconscious, because it works deep in the mind; the process of acquirement is conscious and loud, because its work is all on the mind's surface. Moreover the former is exceedingly slow, insomuch as to yield from day to day no audible results, and so cannot be made available for effect in recitation: the latter is rapid, yielding recitable results from hour to hour; the effect comes quickly, is quickly told in recitation, and makes a splendid appearance, thus tickling the vanity of pupils mightily, as also of their loving (self-loving?) parents.

But then, on the other hand, the culture that you have

once got you thenceforward keep, and can nowise part with or lose it ; slow in coming, it comes to stay with you, and to be an indelible part of you : whereas your acquirement is, for the most part, quickly got, and as quickly lost ; for, indeed, it makes no part of the mind, but merely hangs or sticks on its outside. So, here, the pupil just crams in study, disgorges in recitation, and then forgets it all, to go through another like round of cramming, disgorging, and forgetting. Thus the pulse of your acquirement is easily counted, and foots up superbly from day to day ; but nobody can count the pulse of your culture, for it has none, at least none that is or can be perceived. In other words, the course of culture is dimly marked by years ; that of acquirement is plainly marked by hours.

And so no one can parse, or cares to parse, the delight he has in Shakespeare, for the parsing just kills the delight : the culture one gets from studying his poetry *as poetry*, he can nowise recite, for it is not a recitable thing, and he can tell you nothing about it : he can only say he loves the poetry, and that talking with it somehow recreates and refreshes him. But any one can easily learn to parse the Poet's words : what he gets from studying his poetry as grammar, or logic, or rhetoric, or prosody, this he can recite, can talk glibly about it ; but it stirs no love in him, has no recreation or refreshment for him at all ; none, that is, unless by touching his vanity, and putting him in love with himself for the pretty show he makes in recitation. There is, to be sure, a way of handling the study of Shakespeare, whereby the pupils may be led to take pleasure not so much in his poetry itself as in their own supposed knowledge and appreciation of it. That way, however, I just do not believe in at all ; no ! not even though it be the right way for bringing pupils to know Shakespeare

in the eminent sense. I have myself learnt him, if I may claim to know him at all, in a very uneminent sense, and have for more than forty years been drawn onwards in the study purely by the natural pleasantness of his poetry ; and so I am content to have others do. Thus, you see, it has never been with me “ a noble study ” at all.

Well now, our education is continually saying, in effect if not in words, “ What is the use of pursuing such studies, or pursuing them in such a way, as can produce no available results, nothing to show, from day to day ? Put away your slow thing, whose course is but faintly marked even by years, and give us the spry thing, that marks its course brilliantly by days, perhaps by hours. Let the clock of our progress tick loudly, that we may always know just where it is, and just where we are. Except we can count the pulse of your process, we will not believe there is any life or virtue in it. None of your silences for us, if you please ! ”

A few words now on another, yet nearly connected, topic, and I have done. — I have long thought, and the thought has kept strengthening with me from year to year, that our educational work proceeds altogether too much by recitations. Our school routine is now a steady stream of these, so that teachers have no time for any thing else ; the pupils being thus held in a continual process of alternate cramming and disgorging. As part and parcel of this recitation system, we must have frequent examinations and exhibitions, for a more emphatic marking of our progress. The thing has grown to the height of a monstrous abuse, and is threatening most serious consequences. It is a huge perpetual-motion of forcing and high-pressure ; no possible pains being spared to keep the pupils intensely conscious of their proficiency, or of their deficiency, as the case may be : motives of pride,

vanity, shame, ambition, rivalry, emulation, are constantly appealed to and stimulated, and the nervous system kept boiling-hot with them. Thus, to make the love of knowledge sprout soon enough, and grow fast and strong enough for our ideas, we are all the while dosing and provoking it with a sort of mental and moral cantharides. Surely, the old arguments of the rod and the ferule, as persuasives to diligence, were far wholesomer, yes, and far kinder too, than this constant application of intellectual drugs and high-wines: the former only made the skin tingle and smart a little while, and that was the end of it; whereas the latter plants its pains within the very house of life, and leaves them rankling and festering there. So our way is, to spare the skin and kill the heart.

And, if the thing is not spoiling the boys, it is at all events killing the girls. For, as a general rule, girls are, I take it, more sensitive and excitable naturally than boys, and therefore more liable to have their brain and nervous system fatally wronged and diseased by this dreadful, this cruel, fomenting with unnatural stimulants and provocatives. To be sure, it makes them preternaturally bright and interesting for a while, and we think the process is working gloriously: but this is all because the dear creatures have come to blossom at a time when as yet the leaves should not have put forth; and so, when the proper time arrives for them to be in the full bloom of womanhood, leaf, blossom, and all are gone, leaving them faded and withered and joyless; and chronic ill health, premature old age, untimely death, are their lot and portion. Of course, the thing cannot fail to have the effect of devitalizing and demoralizing and dwarfing the mind itself. The bright glow in its cheeks is but the hectic flush of a consumptive state.

This is no fancy-picture, no dream of a speculative imagination : it is only too true in matter of fact ; as any one may see, or rather as no one can choose but see, who uses his eyes upon what is going on about us. Why, Massachusetts cannot now build asylums fast enough for her multiplying insane ; and, if things keep on as they are now going, the chances are that the whole State will in no very long time come to be almost one continuous hospital of lunatics. All this proceeds naturally and in course from our restless and reckless insistence on forcing what is, after all, but a showy, barren, conceited intellectualism. But, indeed, the consequences of this thing are, some of them, too appalling to be so much as hinted here : I can but speak the word *motherhood*,—a word even more laden with tender and sacred meaning than *womanhood*.

I have talked with a good many of our best teachers on this subject, never with any one who did not express a full concurrence with me in the opinion, that the recitation business is shockingly and ruinously overworked in our teaching. But they say they can do nothing, or at the best very little, to help it ; the public will have it so ; the thing has come to be a deep-seated chronic disease in our educational system : this disease has got to run its course and work itself through ; it is to be hoped that, when matters are at the worst, they will take a turn, and begin to mend : at all events, time alone can work out a redress of the wrong. In all this they are perfectly right ; so that the blame of the thing nowise rests with them. Neither does the blame rest ultimately with superintendents, supervisors, or committee-men, where Gail Hamilton, in her recent book, places it : the trouble lies further back, in the state of the public mind itself, which has for a long time been industriously, incessantly, systematically,

perverted, corrupted, depraved, by plausible but shallow innovators and quacks.

The real truth is, things have come to that pass with us, that parents will not believe there is or can be any real growth of mind in their children, unless they can see them growing from day to day ; whereas a growing that can be so seen is of course just no growing at all, but only a bloating ; which I believe I have said somewhere before. In this wretched mispersuasion, they use all possible means to foster in their children a morbid habit of conscious acquirement ; and a system of recitations, examinations, and exhibitions to keep the process hot and steaming, is the thing to do it.

But I more than suspect the primitive root of the difficulty lies deeper still, and is just here : That, having grown into a secret disrelish of the old religion of our fathers, as being too objective in its nature, and too firm and solid in its objectiveness, to suit our taste, we have turned to an idolatry of intellect and knowledge ; have no faith in any thing, no love for any thing, but what we spin, or seem to spin, out of our own minds. So in the idolatry of intellect, as in other idolatries, the marble statue with which it begins naturally comes, in process of time, to be put aside as too weighty, too expensive, and too still, and to be replaced with a hollow and worthless image all made up of paper and paint. And the cheaper and falser the idol is, the more eagerly do the devotees cut and scourge themselves in the worship of it. Hence the prating and pretentious intellectualism which we pursue with such suicidal eagerness.

I must add, that of the same family with the cant spoken of before is that other canting phrase now so rife among us about "the higher education." The lower education, yes, the *lower*, is what we want ; and if this be duly cared for,

the higher may be safely left to take care of itself. The latter will then come, and so it ought to come, of its own accord, just as fast and as far as the former finds or develops the individual aptitude for it ; and the attempting to give it regardless of such aptitude can only do what it is now doing, namely, spoil a great many people for all useful hand-work, without fitting them for any sort of head-work.

Of course there are some studies which may, perhaps must, proceed more or less by recitation. But, as a perpetual show of mind in the young is and can be nothing but a perpetual sham, so I am and long have been perfectly satisfied that at least three-fourths of our recitations ought to be abandoned with all practicable speed, and be replaced by the better methods of our fathers, — methods that hold fast to the old law of what Dr. William B. Carpenter terms “unconscious cerebration,” which is indeed the irrepealable law of all true mental growth and all right intellectual health. Nay, more ; the best results of the best thinking in the best and ripest heads come under the operation of the self-same law, — just that, and no other.

Assuredly, therefore, the need now most urgently pressing upon us is, to have vastly more of growth, and vastly less of manufacture, in our education ; or, in other words, that the school be altogether more a garden, and altogether less a mill. And a garden, especially with the rich multitudinous flora of Shakespeare blooming and breathing in it, can it be, ought it to be, other than a pleasant and happy place ?

The child whose love is here at least doth reap
One precious gain, that he forgets himself.

INTRODUCTION.

Shakespeare as an Historian.

SHAKESPEARE has probably done more to diffuse a knowledge of English history than all the historians put together ; our liveliest and best impressions of “ merry England in the olden time ” being generally drawn from his pages. Though we seldom think of referring to him as authority in matters of fact, yet we are apt to make him our standard of old English manners and character and life, reading other historians by his light, and trying them by his measures, without being distinctly conscious of it.

It scarce need be said that the Poet's labours in this kind are as far as possible from being the unsouled political diagrams of history : they are, in the right and full sense of the term, dramatic revivifications of the Past, wherein the shades of departed things are made to live their life over again, to repeat themselves, as it were, under our eye ; so that they have an interest for us such as no mere narrative of events can possess. If there are any others able to give us as just notions, provided we read them, still there are none who come near him in the art of causing themselves to be read. And the further we push our historical researches, the more we are brought to recognize the substantial justness of his representations. Even when he makes free with chronology, and varies from the actual order of things, it is commonly in quest of something higher and better than chronological

accuracy ; and the result is in most cases favourable to right conceptions ; the persons and events being thereby so knit together in a sort of vital harmony as to be better understood than if they were ordered with literal exactness of time and place. He never fails to hold the mind in natural intercourse and sympathy with living and operative truth. Kings and princes and the heads of the State, it is true, figure prominently in his scenes ; but this is done in such a way as to set us face to face with the real spirit and sense of the people, whose claims are never sacrificed, to make an imposing pageant or puppet-show of political automaton. If he brings in fictitious persons and events, mixing them up with real ones, it is that he may set forth into view those parts and elements and aspects of life which lie without the range of common history ; enshrining in representative ideal forms the else neglected substance of actual character.

But the most noteworthy point in this branch of the theme is, that out of the materials of an entire age and nation he so selects and uses a few as to give a just conception of the whole ; all the lines and features of its life and action, its piety, chivalry, wisdom, policy, wit, and profligacy, being gathered up and wrought out in fair proportion and clear expression. Where he deviates most from all the authorities known to have been consulted by him, there is a large, wise propriety in his deviations, such as might well prompt the conjecture of his having written from some traditionary matter which the historians had failed to chronicle. And indeed some of those deviations have been remarkably verified by the researches of latter times ; as if the Poet had exercised a sort of prophetic power in his dramatic retrospections. So that our latest study and ripest judgment in any historical matter handled by him will be apt to fall in with and confirm

the impressions at first derived from him ; that which in the outset approved itself to the imagination as beautiful, in the end approving itself to the judgment as true.

These remarks, however, must not be taken as in disparagement of other forms of history. It is important for us to know much which it was not the Poet's business to teach, and which if he had attempted to teach, we should probably learn far less from him. Nor can we be too much on our guard against resting in those vague general notions of the Past which are so often found ministering to conceit and flippant shallowness. For, in truth, however we may exult in the free soarings of the spirit beyond the bounds of time and sense, one foot of the solid ground of Facts, where our thoughts must needs be limited by the matter that feeds them, is worth far more than acres upon acres of cloud-land glory where, as there is nothing to bound the sight, because nothing to be seen, so a man may easily credit himself with "gazing into the abysses of the infinite." And perhaps the best way to keep off all such conceit is by holding the mind down to the specialties of local and particular truth. These specialties, however, it is not for poetry to supply ; nay, rather, it would cease to be poetry, should it go about to supply them. And it is enough that Shakespeare, in giving us what lay within the scope of his art, facilitates and furthers the learning of that which lies out of it ; working whatever matter he takes into a lamp to light our way through that which he omits. This is indeed to make the Historical Drama what it should be, a "concentration of history" ; setting our thoughts at the point where the several lines of truth converge, and from whence we may survey the field of his subject both in its unity and its variety.

All this is to be understood as referring specially to the

Poet's dramas in English history ; though much of it holds good also in regard to the Roman tragedies.* Of those dramas, ten in number, *King John* comes first in the historical order of time. And in respect of this piece the foregoing remarks are subject to no little abatement or qualification. As a work of art, the play has indeed considerable merit ; but as a piece of historical portraiture its claims may easily be overstated. In such a work, diplomatic or documentary exactness is not altogether possible, nor is it even desirable any further than will run smooth with the conditions of the dramatic form. For, to be truly an historical *drama*, a work should not adhere to the literal truth of history in

* The dramas derived from the English history, ten in number, form one of the most valuable of Shakespeare's works, and are partly the fruit of his maturest age. I say advisedly *one* of his works ; for the Poet evidently intended them to form one great whole. It is, as it were, an historical heroic poem in the dramatic form, of which the several plays constitute the rhapsodies. The main features of the events are set forth with such fidelity ; their causes, and even their secret springs, are placed in so clear a light ; that we may gain from them a knowledge of history in all its truth ; while the living picture makes an impression on the imagination which can never be effaced. But this series of dramas is designed as the vehicle of a much higher and more general instruction ; it furnishes examples of the political course of the world, applicable to all times. This mirror of kings should be the manual of princes : from it they may learn the intrinsic dignity of their hereditary vocation ; but they will also learn the difficulties of their situation, the dangers of usurpation, the inevitable fall of tyranny, which buries itself under its attempts to obtain a firmer foundation ; lastly, the ruinous consequences of the weaknesses, errors, and crimes of kings, for whole nations, and many subsequent generations. Eight of these plays, from *Richard the Second* to *Richard the Third*, are linked together in uninterrupted successions, and embrace a most eventful period of nearly a century of English history. The events portrayed in them not only follow each other, but are linked together in the closest and most exact connection ; and the cycle of revolts, parties, civil and foreign wars, which began with the deposition of Richard the Second, first ends with the accession of Henry the Seventh to the throne. — SCHLEGEL.

such sort as to hinder the proper dramatic life ; that is, the laws of the Drama are here paramount to the facts of history ; which infers that, where the two cannot stand together, the latter are to give way. Yet, when and so far as they are fairly compatible, neither ought to be sacrificed ; at least, historical fidelity is so far essential to the *perfection* of the work. And Shakespeare's mastery of his art is especially apparent from the degree in which he has reconciled them. And the historical inferiority of *King John*, as will be shown hereafter, lies mainly in this, that, taking his other works in the same line as the standard, the facts of history are disregarded much beyond what the laws of Art seem to require.

Time of the Composition.

The only extant or discovered notice of *King John*, till it appeared in the folio of 1623, is in the often-quoted list given by Francis Meres in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598. So that all we can say with certainty is, that the play was written some time before that date. Various attempts have been made to argue the date of the writing from allusions to contemporary matters ; but I cannot see that those attempts really amount to any thing at all. On the other hand, some of the German critics are altogether out, when, arguing from the internal evidences of style, structure of the verse, and tone of thought, they refer the piece to the same period of the author's life with *The Tempest*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Cymbeline*. In these respects, it strikes me as having an intermediate cast between *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *The Merchant of Venice*. From the characteristics of style alone, I am quite persuaded that the play was written some considerable time before *King Henry the Fourth*. It

thus synchronizes, I should say, very nearly with *King Richard the Second*. The matter is well stated by Schlegel : “ In *King John* the political and warlike events are dressed out with solemn pomp, for the very reason that they have little of true grandeur. The falsehood and selfishness of the monarch speak in the style of a manifesto. Conventional dignity is most indispensable where personal dignity is wanting. Falconbridge is the witty interpreter of this language ; he ridicules the secret springs of politics, without disapproving of them ; for he owns that he is endeavouring to make his fortune by similar means, and would rather be of the deceivers than the deceived ; there being in his view of the world no other choice.” Schlegel thus regards the peculiarities in question as growing naturally out of the subject ; whereas I have no scruple of referring them to the undergraduate state of the Poet’s genius ; for in truth they are much the same as in several other plays where no such cause has been alleged. These remarks, however, are hardly applicable except to the first three Acts of the play ; in the last two we have much more of the full-grown Shakespeare, sure-footed and self-supporting ; the hidden elements of character, and the subtle shapings and turnings of guilty thought shining out in clear transparence, or flashing forth amidst the stress of passion ; with kindlings of poetic and dramatic inspiration not unworthy the best workmanship of the Poet’s middle period.

Bale’s Pageant of *King John*.

Shakespeare drew the material of his other histories from Holinshed, and no doubt had or might have had access to the same source in writing *King John*. Yet in all the

others the rights of historic truth are for the most part duly observed. Which would seem to argue that in this case he not only left his usual guide, but had some special reason for doing so. Accordingly it appears that the fore-mentioned sins against history were not original with him. The whole plot and plan of the drama, the events and the ordering of them, all indeed but the poetry and character, were borrowed.

The reign of King John was specially fruitful of doings such as might be made to tell against the old claims and usages of the Mediæval Church. This aptness of the matter caused it to be early and largely used in furthering the great ecclesiastical revolution of the sixteenth century. The precise date is not known, but Bishop Bale's pageant of *King John* was probably written in the time of Edward the Sixth. The design of this singular performance was to promote the Reformation, of which Bale was a very strenuous and unscrupulous supporter. Some of the leading events of John's reign, his disputes with the Pope, the sufferings of his kingdom under the interdict, the surrender of his crown to the Legate, and his reputed death by poison, are there used, or abused, in a way to suit the time and purpose of the writer. The historical characters are the King himself, Pope Innocent the Third, Pandulf, Langton, Simon of Swinstead, and a monk called Raymundus. With these are mixed various allegorical personages, — England, who is said to be a widow, Imperial Majesty, Nobility, Clergy, Civil Order, Treason, Verity, and Sedition, the latter serving as the Jester of the piece. Thus we have the common material of the old Moral-plays rudely combined with some elements of the Historical Drama such as grew into use on the public stage forty or fifty years later. And the piece, though written by a bishop, teems with the

lowest ribaldry and vituperation: therewithal it is totally barren of any thing that can pretend to the name of poetry or wit; in short, the whole thing is at once thoroughly stupid, malignant, and vile. There is no likelihood that Shakespeare knew any thing of Bale's pageant, as it was never printed till some fifty years ago, the original manuscript having then been lately discovered in the library of the Duke of Devonshire.

Foundation of the Play.

The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England, upon which Shakespeare's play was founded, came from the press first in 1591, again in 1611, and a third time in 1622. The first issue was anonymous; the other two were put forth with Shakespeare's name as author; which really does nothing towards proving it to be his, as we have divers instances of other men's workmanship being fathered upon him. Steevens at one time thought it to be Shakespeare's, but afterwards gave it up, as well he might. Several of the German critics have taken the other side, arguing the point at great length, but with little effect. To answer their arguments were more easy than profitable; and such answer can better be spared than the space it would fill, since no English reader able to understand the reasoning will need it, after once reading the play. Coleridge indeed went so far in 1802 as to pronounce it "not his, yet of him"; a judgment in which few, I apprehend, will concur. In effect, all the English critics agree that he did not write it, though scarce any two of them agree who did.

The Troublesome Reign, which is in two Parts, bears strong internal marks of having been written when the enthusiasm of the nation was wrought up to the height about the Spanish

Armada, and when the Papacy was spitting its impotent thunders against the throne and State of the lion-Queen. Abounding in spoken and acted satire and invective, the piece must have been hugely grateful to that national feeling which issued in the Reformation, and which was mightily strengthened afterwards by the means made use of to put the Reformation down. The subject was strikingly apt for the purpose ; which was no doubt the cause of its being chosen.

The piece, however, is a prodigious advance upon Bale's performance. The most considerable exception to this is where Falconbridge, while by the King's order he is plundering the religious houses, finds a fair young nun hidden in a chest which is supposed to contain the Abbot's treasures. Campbell regrets that the Poet did not retain this incident,—a regret in which I am far from sympathizing ; for, surely, to hold up the crimes of individuals in such a way or at such a time as to set a stigma upon whole classes of men, was a work that might well be left to meaner hands.

An intense hatred of Popery runs as a special purpose through both of the older pieces. Which matter is reformed altogether in Shakespeare ; who understood well enough, no doubt, that any such *special* purpose was quite inconsistent with the just proportions of Art. He therefore discovers no repugnance to Popery save in the form of a just and genuine patriotism ; has no particular symptoms of a Protestant spirit, but only the natural beatings of a sound, honest English heart, resolute to withstand alike all foreign encroachments, whether from kings or emperors or popes. Thus his feeling against Rome is wisely tempered in that proportion which is required by the laws of morality and Art, issuing in a firm, manly national sentiment such as all men may justly respond to, be their creed what it may.

So that *King John*, as compared with the piece out of which it was built, yields a forcible instance and proof of the Poet's universality. He follows his predecessor in those things which appeal to the feelings of man as man, but forsakes him in whatever flatters the prejudices and antipathies of men as belonging to this or that party or sect. And as aversion to Rome is chastised down from the prominence of a special purpose, the parts of Arthur and Constance and Falconbridge proportionably rise ; parts that spontaneously knit in with the common sympathies of humanity, — such a language as may always dwell together with the spirit of a man, and be twisted about his heart for ever.

Still the question recurs, Why did Shakespeare, with the authentic materials of history at hand, and with his own matchless power of shaping those materials into beautiful and impressive forms, — why did he, in this single instance, depart from his usual course, preferring a fabulous history to the true, and this too when, for aught now appears, the true would have answered his purpose just as well? It is to come at a probable answer to this question that I have dwelt so long on the two older pieces. We thus see that for special causes the subject was early brought upon the stage. The same causes long operated to keep it there. The *King John* of the stage, striking in with the passions and interests of the time, had become familiar to the people, and twined itself closely with their feelings and thoughts. A faithful version would have worked at great disadvantage in competition with the theatrical one thus established. This prepossession of the popular mind Shakespeare may well have judged it unwise to disturb. In other words, the current of popular association being so strong, he probably chose rather to fall in with it than to stem it. We may regret that he did so ; but we

can hardly doubt that he did it knowingly and on principle : nor should we so much blame him for not stemming that current as thank him for purifying it.

Historic Outline.

I will next present, as briefly as may be, so much of authentic history as will throw light directly on the subject. — Henry the Second, the first of the Plantagenet kings, had four sons, Henry, Richard, Geoffrey, and John. Eleanor, his queen, was first married to Louis the Seventh of France, and some sixteen years after the marriage was divorced on suspicion of conjugal infidelity. Within six weeks after the divorce, she was married to Henry, then Earl of Anjou, and much younger than herself. She brought him large possessions indeed, but not enough to offset the trouble she caused in his family and kingdom. Unfaithful to her first husband, and jealous of the second, she instigated his sons into rebellion against him. In 1189, after a reign of thirty-five years, Henry died, invoking the vengeance of Heaven on the ingratitude of his children, and was succeeded by Richard, Henry and Geoffrey having died before him. Geoffrey, Duke of Bretagne in right of Constance his wife, left one son, Arthur. In 1190, when Arthur was a mere child, Richard contracted him in marriage with the daughter of Tancred, King of Sicily, at the same time owning him as "our most dear nephew, and heir, if by chance we should die without issue." At Richard's death, however, in 1199, John produced a testament of his brother's, giving him the crown. Anjou, Touraine, and Maine were the proper patrimony of the Plantagenets, and therefore devolved to Arthur as the acknowledged representative of that House, the rule

of lineal succession being there fully established. To the ducal chair of Bretagne Arthur was the proper heir in right of his mother, who was then Duchess-regnant of that province. John claimed the dukedom of Normandy, as the proper inheritance from his ancestor, William the Conqueror, and his claim was there admitted. Poitou, Guienne, and five other French provinces were the inheritance of Eleanor his mother ; but she made over her title to him ; and there also his claim was recognized. The English crown he claimed in virtue of his brother's will, but took care to strengthen that claim by a parliamentary election. In the strict order of inheritance, all these possessions, be it observed, were due to Arthur ; but that order, it appears, was not then fully established, save in the provinces belonging to the House of Anjou.

As Duke of Bretagne, Arthur was a vassal of France, and therefore bound to homage as the condition of his title. Constance, feeling his need of a protector, engaged to Philip Augustus, King of France, that he should do homage also for the other provinces, where his right was clogged with no such conditions. Philip accordingly met him at Mans, received his oath, gave him knighthood, and took him to Paris. Philip was cunning, ambitious, and unscrupulous, and his plan was to drive his own interests in Arthur's name : with the Prince entirely in his power, he could use him as an ally or a prisoner, whichever would best serve his turn ; and in effect " Arthur was a puppet in his hands, to be set up or knocked down, as he desired to bully or cajole John out of the territories he claimed in France." In the year 1200, Philip was at war with John in pretended maintenance of Arthur's rights ; but before the end of that year the war ended in a peace, by the terms of which John was to give his niece, Blanche of Castile, in marriage to Louis the

Dauphin, with a dowry of several valuable fiefs; and Arthur was to hold even his own Bretagne as a vassal of John. At the time of this treaty Constance was still alive; and Arthur, fearing, it is said, his uncle's treachery, remained in the care of Philip. In less than two years, however, the peace was broken. John, though his former wife was still living, having seized and married Isabella of Angouleme, already betrothed to the Count de la Marche, the Count headed an insurrection, and Philip joined him, brought Arthur again upon the scene, and made him raise the flag of war against his uncle. For some time Philip was carrying all before him, till at length Arthur was sent with a small force against the town of Mirabeau, where his grandmother Eleanor was stationed; and, while he was besieging her in the castle, John "used such diligence, that he was upon his enemies' necks ere they could understand any thing of his coming." His mother was quickly relieved, Arthur fell into his hands, and was conveyed to the castle of Falaise; and Philip withdrew from the contest, as the people would have nothing to do with him but as the protector of their beloved Prince. The capture of Arthur took place in July, 1202, he being seventeen or eighteen years old.

The King then betook himself to England, and had his coronation repeated. Shortly after, he returned to France, where, a rumour being spread abroad of Arthur's death, the nobles made great suit to have him set at liberty. Not prevailing in this, they banded together, and "began to levy sharp wars against King John in divers places, inso-much that it was thought there would be no quiet in those parts so long as Arthur lived." A charge of murder being then carried to the French Court, the King was summoned thither for trial, but refused to go; whereupon he "was

found guilty of felony and treason, and adjudged to forfeit all the lands which he held by homage." Thence sprang up a war in which John was totally stripped of his French possessions, and at last stole off with inexpressible baseness to England.

The quarrel of John with Pope Innocent did not break out till 1207. It was about the election of Cardinal Langton to the See of Canterbury. First came the interdict; then, some two years after, the excommunication; and finally, at a like interval, the deposition; Philip being engaged to go with an army, and execute the sentence; wherein he was likely to succeed, till at length, in the Spring of 1213, John made his full submission. The next year, he was desperately involved in the famous contest with his barons, which resulted in the establishment of the *Great Charter*. Of this great movement, so decisive for the liberties of England, Langton was the life and soul. As Primate he had been forced upon the King by the Pope; but he now stood by his country against both Pope and King. No sooner had John confirmed the Charter than his tyranny and perfidy broke out afresh; whereupon the barons, finding that no laws nor oaths could curb the faithless and cruel devil within him, offered the crown to Louis the Dauphin on condition of his helping them put down the hated tyrant. John died in 1216.

Breaches of History.

The point where all the parts of *King John* centre and converge into one has been rightly stated to be the fate of Arthur. This is the heart, whose pulsations are felt throughout the entire structure. The alleged right of Arthur to the throne draws on the wars between Philip and John, and

finally the loss from the English crown of the provinces in France. And so far the drama is strictly true to historical fact. But, besides this, the real or reputed murder of Arthur by John is set forth as the main cause of the troubles which distracted the latter part of John's reign, and ended only with his life. Which was by no means the case. For though, by the treatment of his nephew, John did greatly outrage the loyalty and humanity of the nation, still that was but one act in a life-long course of cruelty, cowardice, lust, and perfidy, which stamped him all over with baseness, and finally drew upon him the general hatred and execration of his subjects. Had he not thus sinned away and lost the hearts of the people, he might have safely defied the papal interdict ; for who can doubt that they would have braved the thunders of the Vatican for him, since they did not scruple afterwards to do so against him? But the fact or the mode of Arthur's death was far from being the main cause of that loss. Pope Innocent the Third was a very great man ; his proceedings against John were richly deserved : at that time there was no other power in Europe that could tame or restrain the savagery of such lawless and brutal oppressors ; and the Church had, by her services to liberty and humanity, well earned the prerogatives then exercised in her name. The death of Arthur, though the consequences thereof survived in a general weakening of the English State, had quite ceased to be an active force in European politics when the ecclesiastical tempest broke loose upon John.

Here, then, we have a breach of history in the very central point of the drama ; this too without any apparent reason in the laws of the dramatic form. Such a flaw at the heart of the piece must greatly disarrange the order of the work as a representation of facts, and make it very untrue to the ideas

and sentiments of the English people at the time ; for it implies all along that Arthur was clearly the rightful sovereign, and that he was so regarded ; whereas in truth the rule of lineal descent was not then settled in the State, and the succession of John to the throne was so far from being irregular, that of the last five occupants four had derived their main title from election, — the same right whereby John himself held it.

The same objection holds proportionably against another feature of the play. The life of the Austrian Archduke who had behaved so harshly and so meanly towards Richard the First is prolonged five or six years beyond its actual period, for no other purpose, apparently, than that Richard's natural son may have the honour of revenging his father's wrongs and death. Richard fell in a quarrel with Vidomar, Viscount of Limoges, one of his own vassals. A treasure having been found on Vidomar's estate, the King refused the offer of a part, and insisted on having the whole ; and while, to enforce this claim, he was making war on the owner, he was wounded with an arrow by one of Vidomar's archers. This occurred in 1199, when Leopold of Austria had been dead several years. The play, however, drives the sin against history to the extreme point of making Austria and Limoges the same person. Now, if such an exploit were needful for the proper display of Falconbridge's character, it does not well appear but that the real Vidomar would have answered the purpose ; at all events, the thing might surely have been compassed without so signal a breach of historical truth. Here, however, the vice stops with itself, instead of vitiating the other parts, as in the former case.

Again : In the play the people of Angiers stoutly refuse to own either John or Arthur as their king, until the ques-

tion shall have first been decided in battle between them ; whereas in fact Anjou, Touraine, and Maine declared for Arthur from the first, and did not waver at all in their allegiance. The drama also represents the imprisonment and death of Arthur as occurring in England ; while in fact he was first put under guard in the castle of Falaise, and afterwards transferred to a dungeon in the castle of Rouen, from whence he was never known to come out alive. These, however, are immaterial points in the course of the drama, save as the latter has the effect of bringing Arthur nearer to the homes and hearts of the English people ; who would naturally be more apt to resent his death, if it occurred at their own doors. Other departures from fact there are, which may easily be justified, as being more than made up by a gain of dramatic truth and effect. Such, for instance, are the freedoms taken with Constance, who, in the play, remains a widow after the death of her first husband, and survives to bewail the captivity of her son and the wreck of his hopes ; but who, in fact, after a short widowhood was married to Guy of Thouars, and died in 1201, the year before Arthur fell into the hands of his uncle. A breach of history every way justifiable, since it gives an occasion, not otherwise to be had, for some noble outpourings of maternal grief and tenderness. And the mother's transports of sorrow might well consist with a second marriage, though to have represented her thus would have impaired the pathos of her situation, and at the same time have been a needless embarrassment of the action. It is enough that so she would have felt and spoken, had she been still alive ; her proper character being thus allowed to transpire in circumstances which she did not live to see.

But, of the *justifiable* departures from fact, the greatest

consists in anticipating by several years the papal instigations as the cause of the war in which Arthur was taken prisoner. For in reality Rome had no hand in setting on that war ; it was undertaken, as we have seen, by Philip of his own will and for his own ends ; there being no rupture between John and the Pope till some time after Arthur had disappeared. But the laws of dramatic effect often require that the force and import of divers actual events be condensed and massed together. To disperse the interest over many details of action involves such a weakening of it as poetry does not tolerate. So that the Poet was eminently judicious in this instance of concentration. The conditions of right dramatic interest clearly required something of the kind. United, the several events might stand in the drama ; divided, they must fall. Thus the course of the play in this matter was fitted to secure as much of actual truth as could be told *dramatically* without defeating the purpose of the telling. Shakespeare has many happy instances of such condensation in his historical pieces.

Political Bearings.

The reign of King John was specially remarkable as being the dawn of genuine English nationality, such as it has continued substantially to the present day. And the faults and crimes of the sovereign seem to have had the effect of testing and so toughening the national unity ; just as certain diseases in infancy operate to strengthen the constitution of the man, and thus to prepare him for the struggles of life. England was then wrestled, as it were, into the beginnings of that just, sturdy, indomitable self-reliance, or *selfhood*, which she has ever since so gloriously maintained.

The Poet's vigorous and healthy national spirit is strongly

manifested in the workmanship of *King John*. Falconbridge serves as a chorus to give a right political interpretation of the events and action of the play. To him, John impersonates the unity and majesty of the nation; so that defection from him tends to nothing less than national dissolution. Whatever he may be as a man, as King Patriotism has no way but to stand by him at all hazards; for the rights and interests of England are inseparably bound up with the reverence of his person and the maintenance of his title. The crimes of the individual must not be allowed to peril the independence and life of the nation. Thus, in Falconbridge's view, England can only rest true to herself by sticking to the King against all comers whatsoever. And such, undoubtedly, is the right idea of the English State, and of the relation which the Crown bears to the other parts of her political Constitution. No philosophy or statesmanship has got beyond Shakespeare in the mastery of this principle. And this principle is the moral backbone of the drama, however the *poetry* of it may turn upon other points.

As for the politics of the piece, these present a rather tangled and intricate complication, which it would hardly pay to trace out in detail; at least, the doing so would strike something too wide of my usual method and purpose in these discourses. Besides, the ground in this respect is well covered by Gervinus, who has worked through the process with great ability indeed, though, as it seems to me, at a rather unconscionable length.*

* Here is a brief portion: "John, imprudent once in resting on false supports, is so now in the wicked removal of weak enemies, and in the dangerous provocation of strong opposition. He contrives the murder of the harmless Arthur, and irritates the already-disturbed Church by fresh extortion. The legate Pandulf, a master of Machiavelian policy, watches these

The characterization of *King John* corresponds very well, in the degree of excellence, with the period to which I have on other grounds assigned the writing. Much of it, and indeed nearly all, at least in the germs and outlines, was taken from *The Troublesome Reign*; and the use of the borrowed matter discovers a mark-worthy exercise of judgment in much retrenching of superfluities, in not a little moral purging and refining, in skilful recasting of features, and in many ennobling additions.

The delineation of the English barons is made to reflect the tumultuous and distracted condition of the time, when the best men were inwardly divided and fluctuating between the claims of parliamentary election and actual possession on the one side, and the rights of lineal succession on the other. In such a conflict of duties and motives, the

errors, and builds upon them the new unhallowed league between France and Rome; with cold blood he speculates how Arthur's death may be occasioned by a French invasion, and this again may be advanced by the accusation produced by the murder. This practical prophecy is fulfilled: the country becomes unruly: the King's evil conscience is roused; suspiciously he has himself crowned a second time, and this makes his nobles suspicious also. The murder of Arthur comes to their hearing; they revolt from the King. A new antinational league is formed between the English vassals on the one side and France and the Pope on the other; and the French Dauphin prepares on his part a treacherous death for the traitors to England. Meanwhile the fearful and perplexed John loses his old courage and confidence so far, that he takes his land as a fief from the Pope, and enters into a shameful treaty of subjection to the most virulent of his enemies. The King has forgotten his former vigour, which the enemy has now learned from him; he turns his hardened zeal against poor prophets, only to benumb his superstitious fear; his energy is gone. The unnaturalness of all these complicated alliances is now speedily manifested; the league between England and the Papacy, that between the Papacy and France, that between France and the English vassals, all are broken up, without attaining the object of one of them: they change throughout into the natural enmity which several interests necessitate."

moral sense often drawing sharply at odds with urgent political considerations, the clearest heads and most upright hearts are apt to lose their way ; nor perhaps is it much to be wondered at if in such a state of things self-interest, the one constant motive of human action, gain such headway at last as to swamp all other regards. The noble and virtuous Salisbury successfully resists this depraving tendency indeed, yet the thorns and dangers of the time prove too much for his judgment. From the outset he is divided between allegiance to John and to Arthur, till the crimes and cruelties of the former throw him quite over to the side of the latter. Humanity outwrestles nationality in his breast, and this even to the sacrifice of humanity itself, as matters turn : his scrupulous preference of moral to prudential regards draws him into serious error ; which, to be sure, his rectitude of purpose is prompt to retrace, but not till the mistake has nearly crippled his power for good. His course well illustrates the peril to which goodness, more sensitive than far-sighted, is exposed in such a hard tussle of antagonist principles. In the practical exigencies of life, doing the best we can for those who stand nearest us is often nobler than living up to our own ideal. So there are times when men must set up their rest to stand by their country, right or wrong, and not allow any faults of her rulers to alienate them from her cause. Sometimes the highest sacrifice which Providence requires of us is that of our finer moral feelings, nay, even of our sense of duty itself, to the rough occasions of patriotism. Is it that our own salvation may even depend on willingness to be lost for the saving of others ? All this is rarely exemplified in Salisbury, who, by the way, was the famous William Longsword, natural son to Henry the Second, and so half-brother to John. It is considerable that our better feelings

stay with him even when the more reckless spirit and coarse nature of Falconbridge carry off our judgment.

Character of John.

The King, as he stands in authentic history, was such a piece of irredeemable depravity, so thoroughly weak-headed, rotten-hearted, and bloody-handed, that to set him forth truly without seeming to be dealing in caricature or lampoon, required no little art. The Poet was under the necessity, in some sort, of leaving his qualities to be inferred, instead of showing them directly: the point was, to disguise his meanesses, and yet so to order the disguise as to suggest that it covered something too vile to be seen. And what could better infer his slinking, cowardly, malignant spirit, than his two scenes with Hubert? Here he has neither the boldness to look his purpose in the face, nor the rectitude to dismiss it; so he has no way but to "dodge and palter in the shifts of lowness": he tries by hints and fawning innuendoes to secure the passage of his thought into effect, without committing himself to any responsibility for it; and wants another to be the agent of his will, and yet bear the blame as if acting of his own accord. And afterwards, when the consequences begin to press upon him, he accuses the aptness of the instrument as the cause of his suggestion; and the only sagacity he displays is in shirking the responsibility of his own guilty purpose; his sneaking, selfish fear inspiring him with a quickness and fertility of thought far beyond his capacity under any nobler influences.

The chief trouble with John in the play is, that he conceives himself in a false position, and so becomes himself false to his position in the hope of thereby rendering it

secure. He has indeed far better reasons for holding the throne than he is himself aware of, and the utter selfishness of his aims is what keeps him from seeing them. His soul is so bemired in personal regards, that he cannot rise to any considerations of patriotism or public spirit. The idea of wearing the crown as a sacred trust from the nation never once enters his head. And this is all because he lacks the nobleness to rest his title on national grounds; or because he is himself too lawless of spirit to feel the majesty with which the national law has invested him. As the interest and honour of England have no place in his thoughts, so he feels as if he had stolen the throne, and appropriated it to his own private use. This consciousness of bad motives naturally fills him with dark suspicions and sinister designs. As he is without the inward strength of noble aims, so he does not feel outwardly strong; his bad motives put him upon using means as bad for securing himself; and he can think of no way to clinch his tenure but by meanness and wrong. Thus his sense of inherent baseness has the effect of casting him into disgraces and crimes; his very stings of self-reproach driving him on from bad to worse. If he had the manhood to trust his cause frankly with the nation, as rightly comprehending his trust, he would be strong in the nation's support; but this he is too mean to see.

Nor is John less wanting in manly fortitude than in moral principle: he has not the courage even to be daringly and resolutely wicked; that is, there is no backbone of truth in him either for good or for evil. Insolent, heart-swollen, defiant under success, he becomes utterly abject and cringing in disaster or reverse. "Even so doth valour's show and valour's worth divide in storms of fortune." When his wishes are crowned, he struts and talks big; but a slight

whirl in the wind of chance at once twists him off his pins and lays him sprawling in the mud. That his seeming greatness is but the distention of gas, appears in that the touch of pain or loss soon pricks him into an utter collapse. So that we may almost apply to him what Ulysses says of Achilles in *Troilus and Cressida* :

Possess'd he is with greatness ;
 And speaks not to himself, but with a pride
 That quarrels at self-breath : imagined worth
 Holds in his blood such swoln and hot discourse,
 That 'twixt his mental and his active parts
 Kingdom'd Achilles in commotion rages,
 And batters down himself.

And as, in his craven-hearted selfishness, John cares nothing for England's honour, nor even for his own as king, but only to retain the spoil of his self-imputed trespass ; so he will at any time trade that honour away, and will not mind eating dirt to the King of France or to the Pope, so he may keep his place.

All this was no doubt partly owing to the demoralizing influences of the time. And how deeply those influences worked is well shown in the hoary-headed fraud and heartlessness of priestcraft as represented in Cardinal Pandulf ; who makes it his special business to abuse the highest faculties to the most refined ill purposes ; with subtle and tortuous casuistry explaining away perfidy, treachery, and murder into works of righteousness. The arts of deceit could hardly have come to be used with such unctious self-approval, but from a long discipline of civilized selfishness in endeavouring to prevent or to parry the assaults of violence and barbarism. For, in a state of continual danger and insecurity, cultivated intelligence is naturally drawn to defend itself by

subtlety and craft. The ethereal weapons of reason and sanctity are powerless upon men stupefied by brutal passions ; and this is too apt to generate even in the best characters a habit of seeking safety by "bowing their gray dissimulation" into whatever causes they take in hand. Which, I suspect, would go far to explain the alleged system of "pious frauds" once so little scrupled in the walks of religion and learning. Be this as it may, there was, it seems, virtue enough in the England of King John to bring her safe and sound through the vast perils and corruptions of the time. That reign was in truth the seed-bed of those forces which have since made England so great and wise and free.

All through the reigns of Henry the Seventh and Henry the Eighth, the lately-experienced horrors of civil slaughter in the York and Lancaster wars made the English people nervously apprehensive as to the consequences of a disputed title to the throne. This apprehension had by no means worn off in Shakespeare's time : the nation was still extremely tenacious of the lineal succession, as the only practicable safeguard against the danger of rival claimants. The dogma of the divine right, which then got such headway, was probably more or less the offspring of this sentiment. It has often seemed to me that the Poet, in his sympathy with this strong national feeling, was swayed somewhat from the strict line of historic truth and reason, in ascribing John's crimes and follies, and the evils of his reign, so much to a public distrust of his title. I question whether such distrust really had any considerable hand in those evils. The King's title was generally held at the time to be every way sound and clear. The nervous dread of a disputed succession was mainly the growth of later experience, and then was putatively transferred to a

time when, in fact, it had been little felt. And the anxiety to fence off the evils so dreaded naturally caused the powers of the Crown to be strained up to a pitch hardly compatible with any degree of freedom ; insomuch that in no long time another civil war became necessary, to keep the liberties of England from being swallowed up in the Serbonian bog of royal prerogative. In the apprehension of an experienced danger on one side, men comparatively lost sight of an equal danger on the other side.

Constance.

I suspect that the genius and art of Mrs. Siddons caused the critics of her time and their immediate successors to set a higher estimate upon the delineation of Constance than is fully justified by the work itself. The part seems indeed to have been peculiarly suited to the powers of that remarkable actress ; the wide range of moods, and the tugging conflicts of passion, through which Constance passes, affording scope enough for the most versatile gifts of delivery. If I am right in my notion, Shakespearian criticism has not even yet quite shaken off the spell thus cast upon it. At all events, I find the critics still pitching their praise of the part in a somewhat higher key than I can persuade my voice to sound. The abatement, however, which I would make refers not so much to the conception of the character as to the style of the execution ; which, it seems to me, is far from displaying the Poet's full strength and inwardness with nature. There is in many of her speeches a redundancy of rhetoric and verbal ingenuity, giving them a too theatrical relish. The style thus falls under a reproof well expressed in this very play :

When workmen strive to do better than well,
They do confound their skill in covetousness.

In pursuance of the same thought, Bacon finely remarks the great practical difference between the love of excellence and the love of excelling. And so here we seem to have rather too much of that elaborate artificialness which springs more from ambition than from inspiration. But the fault is among those which I have elsewhere noted as marking the workmanship of the Poet's earlier period.

The idea pervading the delineation is well stated by Hazlitt as "the excess of maternal tenderness, rendered desperate by the fickleness of friends and the injustice of fortune, and made stronger in will, in proportion to the want of all other power." In the judgment of Gervinus, "ambition spurred by maternal love, maternal love fired by ambition and womanly vanity, form the distinguishing features" of Constance; and he further describes her as "a woman whose weakness amounts to grandeur, and whose virtues sink into weakness." I am not indeed greatly in love with this brilliant way of putting things; but Gervinus is apt to be substantially right in such matters. My own tamer view is that the character, though drawn in the best of situations for its amiability to appear, is not a very amiable one. Herein the play is perhaps the truer to history; as the chroniclers make Constance out rather selfish and weak; not so religious in motherhood but that she betrayed a somewhat unvenerable impatience of widowhood. Nevertheless it must be owned that the soul of maternal grief and affection speaks from her lips with not a little majesty of pathos, and occasionally flows in strains of the most melting tenderness. I know not how the voice of a mother's sorrow could discourse more eloquently than in these lines :

Grief fills the room up of my absent child,
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me ;
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,
Remembers me of all his gracious parts,
Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form :
Then, have I reason to be fond of grief.

Nor is there any overstraining of nature in the imagery here used ; for the speaker's passion is of just the right kind and degree to kindle the imagination into the richest and finest utterance.

On the other hand, the general effect of her sorrow is marred by too great an infusion of anger, and she shows too much pride, self-will, and volubility of scorn, to have the full touch of our sympathies. Thus, when Eleanor coarsely provokes her, she retorts in a strain of still coarser railing ; and the bandying of taunts and slurs between them, each not caring what she says, so her speech bites the other, is about equally damaging to them both ; a storm of mutual abuse, in which there is neither modesty nor wit. It is true, she meets with very sore trials of patience, but these can hardly be said to open any springs of sweetness or beauty within her. When she finds that her heart's dear cause is sacrificed to the schemes of politicians ; when it turns out that the King of France and the Archduke of Austria are driving their own ends in her name, and only pretending pity for her and conscience of right, to cover their selfish projects, the heart-wringing disappointment inflames her into outbursts of sarcastic bitterness and scorn ; her speech is stinging and spiteful, and sounds quite as much of the intemperate scold as of the sorrowing and disconsolate mother. The impression of her behaviour in these points is well described by Gervinus : "What a variety of feeling is expressed in those twenty lines where she inquires anxiously after the

truth of that which shocks her to hear ! How her grief, so long as she is alone, restrains itself in calmer anguish in the vestibule of despair ! how it first bursts forth in the presence of others in powerless revenge, rising to a curse which brings no blessing to herself ! and how atoningly behind all this unwomanly rage lies the foil of maternal love ! We should be moved with too violent a pity for this love, if it did not weaken our interest by its want of moderation ; we should turn away from the violence of the woman, if the strength of her maternal affection did not irresistibly enchain us."

Prince Arthur.

As Shakespeare used the allowable license of art in stretching the life of Constance beyond its actual date, that he might enrich his work with the eloquence of a mother's love ; so he took a like freedom in making Arthur younger than the facts prescribed, that he might in larger measure pour in the sweetness of childish innocence and wit. Both of these departures from strict historic order are highly judicious ; at least they are amply redeemed by the dramatic wealth which comes in fitly through them. And in the case of Arthur there is the further gain, that the sparing of his eyes is owing to his potency of tongue and the piercing touch of gentleness ; whereas in the history he is indebted for this to his strength of arm. The Arthur of the play is an artless, gentle, natural-hearted, but high-spirited, eloquent boy, in whom we have the voice of nature pleading for nature's rights, unrestrained by pride of character or place ; who at first braves his uncle, because set on to do so by his mother ; and afterwards fears him, yet knows not why, because his heart is too full of "the holiness of youth" to conceive how any thing so treacherous

and unnatural can be, as that which he fears. And he not only has a most tender and loving disposition, such as cruelty itself can hardly resist, but is also persuasive and wise far beyond his years ; though his power of thought and magic of speech are so managed as rather to aid the impression of his childish age. Observe, too, how in the scene with Hubert his very terror operates in him a sort of preternatural illumination, and inspires him to a course of innocent and unconscious cunning,—the perfect art of perfect artlessness. Of the scene in question Hazlitt justly says, “If any thing ever were penned, heart-piercing, mixing the extremes of terror and pity, of that which shocks and that which soothes the mind, it is this scene.” Yet even here the tender pathos of the loving and lovely boy is marred with some “quirks of wit,” such as I can hardly believe the Poet would have allowed in his best days. In Arthur’s dying speech,—“O me ! my uncle’s spirit is in these stones,”—our impression against John is most artfully heightened ; all his foregoing inhumanity being, as it were, gathered and concentrated into an echo.—Shakespeare has several times thrown the witchery of his genius into pictures of nursery life, bringing children upon the scene, and delighting us with their innocent archness and sweet-witted prattle ; as in the case of Mamilius in *The Winter’s Tale*, and of Lady Macduff and her son ; but Arthur is his most powerful and charming piece in that line. That his great, simple, manly heart loved to play with childhood, is indeed evident enough. Nor is it the least of his claims to our reverence, as an organ of Nature’s bland and benignant wisdom.

Falconbridge.

The reign of King John furnished no characters fully answering the conditions of high dramatic interest. To meet this want, therefore, there was need of one or more *representative* characters,—persons in whom should be centred and consolidated various elements of national character, which were in fact dispersed through many individuals ; or a boiling down of the diffused old John Bull into an ideal specimen. And such is Falconbridge, with his fiery flood of Norman vigour bounding through his veins, his irrepressible dance of animal spirits, his athletic and frolicsome wit, his big, brave, manly heart, his biting sword, and his tongue equally biting ; his soul proof-armoured against all fear save that of doing what were wrong or mean.

The Troublesome Reign supplied the name, and also a slight hint towards the character :

Next them a bastard of the King deceased,
A hardy wild-head, rough and venturous.

But the delineation is thoroughly Shakespearian, is crammed brimful of the Poet's most peculiar mental life ; so that the man is as different as can well be conceived from any thing ever dreamed of in the older play. And, what is specially worth the noting, Shakespeare clearly embodies in him his own sentiment of nationality, pours his hearty, full-souled English spirit into him and through him ; so that the character is, at least in the political sense, truly representative of the author ;—all this, however, without the slightest tincture of egotism or self-obtrusion ; the pure nationality of the man, extricated from all personal and partisan mixtures. So, to Falconbridge, both head and heart, the King, as before

remarked, is truly the Impersonation of the State ; and he surrounds the throne with all those nobilities of thought, and all those ideas of majesty and reverence, which are wanting in John himself. He thus regards the crown just as the wearer ought to regard it. Withal he is fully alive to the wrong-headedness and moral baseness of the King ; but the office is to him so sacred as the palladium of national unity and life, that he will allow neither himself nor others in his presence to speak disrespectfully of the man.

Falconbridge is strangely reckless of appearances. But his heart is evidently much better than his tongue : from his speech you might suppose gain to be his God of gods ; but a far truer language, which he uses without knowing it, tells you that gain is to him just no god at all : he talks as if he cared for nothing but self-interest, while his works proclaim a spirit framed of disinterestedness ; his action thus quietly giving the lie to his words ; this too in such sort as establishes the more firmly his inward truth. His course in this behalf springs partly from an impulse of antagonism to the prevailing spirit about him, where he sees great swollen pretences to virtue without a particle of the thing itself. What he most of all abominates is the pursuit of selfish and sinister ends under the garb of religion ; piety on the tongue with covetousness in the heart fills him with intense disgust ; and his repugnance is so strong, that it sets him spontaneously upon assuming a garb of selfishness to cover his real conscientiousness of mind and purpose. So too, secretly, he is as generous as the Sun, but his generosity puts on an affectation of rudeness or something worse : he will storm at you, to bluff you off from seeing the kindness he is doing you. Of the same stripe is his hatred of cruelty and meanness : while these things are rife about him, he never gets angry or makes any quarrel

with them ; on the contrary, he laughs and breaks sinewy jests over them, as if he thought them witty and smart : upon witnessing the heartless and unprincipled bargaining of the Kings, he passes it off jocosely as a freak of the " mad world," and verbally frames for himself a plan that " smacks somewhat of the policy " ; then, instead of acting out what he thus seems to relish as a capital thing, he goes on to shame down, as far as may be, all such baseness by an example of straightforward nobleness and magnanimity. Then too, with all his laughing roughness of speech and iron sternness of act, so blunt, bold, and downright, he is nevertheless full of humane and gentle feeling. With what burning eloquence of indignation does he denounce the supposed murder of Arthur ! though he has no thought of abetting his claims to the throne against the present occupant. He abhors the deed as a crime : but to his keen, honest eye it is also a stupendous blunder ; and he deploras it as such, because its huge offensiveness to England's heart is what makes it a blunder, and because he is himself in full sympathy with the national conscience, which cannot but be shocked at its hideous criminality. So it may be doubted whether he more resents the wickedness or the stupidity of the act. And how much it imperils the State is revealed to him in the hard strain it makes on his own determined allegiance.

The Poet manages with great art that Falconbridge may be held to John throughout the play by ties which he is too clear of head and too upright of heart to think of renouncing. In the first place, he has been highly trusted and honoured by the King, and he cannot be ungrateful. Then again, in his clear-sighted and comprehensive public spirit, the diverse interests that split others into factions, and plunge

them into deadly strife, are smoothly reconciled : political regards work even more than personal gratitude, to keep him steadfast to the King ; and he is ready with tongue and sword to beat down whatsoever anywhere obstructs a broad and generous nationality. In the intercourse of State functionaries, he, to be sure, pays little heed to the delicacies and refinements of political diplomacy : his plain, frank nature either scorns them or is insensible to them : but his patriotism is thoroughly sound and true, and knows no taste of fear ; and whatever foreign assailants dare to touch England or England's honour, he is for pounding them straight out of the way, and will think of no alternative but to be pounded out of the way by them.—As a representative character, he stands next to Falstaff. Thoroughly Gothic in features and proportions, and as thoroughly English in temper and spirit, his presence rays life and true manliness into every part of the drama. Is it strange that a nation which could grow such originals should have beaten all the rest of the world in every thing useful and beautiful and great?

KING JOHN.



PERSONS REPRESENTED.

| | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| KING JOHN. | PHILIP, King of France. |
| PRINCE HENRY, his Son. | LOUIS, the Dauphin. |
| ARTHUR, Duke of Bretagne. | Archduke of Austria. |
| MARESHALL, Earl of Pembroke. | PANDULPH, the Pope's Legate. |
| FITZ-PETER, Earl of Essex. | MELUN, a French Lord. |
| LONGSWORD, Earl of Salisbury. | CHATILLON, Ambassador from |
| BIGOT, Earl of Norfolk. | France to King John. |
| HUBERT DE BURGH, Chamberlain. | |
| ROBERT FALCONBRIDGE. | ELINOR, Mother to King John. |
| PHILIP, the BASTARD, his Half- | CONSTANCE, Mother to Arthur. |
| Brother. | BLANCH, Daughter to Alphonso, |
| JAMES GURNEY, Servant to Lady | King of Castile. |
| Falconbridge. | LADY FALCONBRIDGE. |
| PETER of Pomfret, a Prophet. | |
| Lords, Citizens of Angiers, Sheriff, Heralds, Officers, Soldiers, Messengers, | |
| and other Attendants. | |

SCENE.—*Sometimes in England, and sometimes in France.*



ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Northampton. A Room of State in the Palace.*

Enter King JOHN, Queen ELINOR, PEMBROKE, ESSEX, SALIS-
BURY, and others, with CHATILLON.

K. John. Now, say, Chatillon, what would France with
us?

Chat. Thus, after greeting, speaks the King of France,
In my behaviour,¹ to the majesty,
The borrow'd majesty of England here.

Eli. A strange beginning : borrow'd majesty !

K. John. Silence, good mother ; hear the embassy.

Chat. Philip of France, in right and true behalf
Of thy deceased brother Geoffrey's son,
Arthur Plantagenet, lays most lawful claim
To this fair island and the territories, —
To Ireland, Poitiers, Anjou, Touraine, Maine ;
Desiring thee to lay aside the sword
Which sways usurpingly these several titles,
And put the same into young Arthur's hand,
Thy nephew and right royal sovereign.

K. John. What follows, if we disallow of this ?

Chat. The proud control² of fierce and bloody war,
T' enforce these rights so forcibly withheld.

K. John. Here have we war for war, and blood for blood,
Controlment for controlment : so answer France.

Chat. Then take my King's defiance from my mouth,
The farthest limit of my embassy.

K. John. Bear mine to him, and so depart in peace :
Be thou as lightning in the eyes of France ;

¹ " In the speech and action I am now going to use." So in v. 2, of this play : " Now hear our English King ; for thus his royalty doth speak *in me*."

² *Control* here means *coercion* or *constraint*. Hooker often uses the word in the kindred sense of to *rebuke*, *censure*, or *chastise* ; as in Preface, ii. 4 : " Authority to convent, to *control*, to punish, as far as excommunication," &c. And viii. 7 : " They began to *control* the ministers of the Gospel for attributing so much force and virtue to the Scriptures of God read." Also in Book vii. 16, 6 : " Which letters he justly taketh in marvellous evil part, and therefore severely *controlleth* his great presumption in making himself a judge of a judge."

For, ere thou canst report I will be there,
 The thunder of my cannon³ shall be heard :
 So, hence ! Be thou the trumpet of our wrath,
 And sullen⁴ presage of your own decay. —
 An honourable conduct let him have : —
 Pembroke, look to't. — Farewell, Chatillon.

[*Exeunt* CHATILLON and PEMBROKE.]

Eli. What now, my son ! have I not ever said
 How that ambitious Constance would not cease
 Till she had kindled France and all the world
 Upon the right and party of her son ?
 This might have been prevented and made whole
 With very easy arguments of love ;
 Which now the manage⁵ of two kingdoms must
 With fearful bloody issue arbitrate.

K. John. Our strong possession and our right for us.

Eli. [*Aside to JOHN.*] Your strong possession much more
 than your right,
 Or else it must go wrong with you and me :

³ The Poet here antedates the use of gunpowder by more than a hundred years. So, again, in ii. 1, we have the expression, "bullets wrapp'd in fire." John's reign began in 1199, and cannon are said to have been first used in the battle of Cressy, 1346. Shakespeare was never studious of historical accuracy in such points: he aimed to speak the language that was most intelligible to his audience, rendering the ancient engines of war by their modern equivalents.

⁴ *Gloomy, dismal, doleful* are among the old senses of *sullen*. So in *2 Henry IV.* i. 1: "And his tongue sounds ever after as a *sullen* bell, remember'd knolling a departing friend." Also in Milton's sonnet to Lawrence: "And by the fire help wate a *sullen* day." — *Trumpet*, in the line before, is put for *trumpeter*. Often so. And, in the line after, *conduct* for *escort*; also a frequent usage. See *Twelfth Night*, page 105, note 20.

⁵ *Manage* for *management, conduct, or administration*; a frequent usage. So in *The Merchant*, iii. 4: "I commit into your hands the husbandry and *manage* of my house until my lord's return."

So much my conscience whispers in your ear,
Which none but Heaven and you and I shall hear.

Enter the Sheriff of Northamptonshire who whispers ESSEX.

Essex. My liege, here is the strangest controversy,
Come from the country to be judged by you,
That e'er I heard : shall I produce the men ?

K. John. Let them approach. — [Exit Sheriff.
Our abbeys and our priories shall pay
This expedition's charge. —

*Re-enter Sheriff, with ROBERT FALCONBRIDGE, and PHILIP his
bastard Brother.*

What men are you ?

Bast. Your faithful subject I, a gentleman
Born in Northamptonshire, and eldest son,
As I suppose, to Robert Falconbridge,
A soldier, by the honour-giving hand
Of Cœur-de-lion knighted in the field.

K. John. What art thou ?

Rob. The son and heir to that same Falconbridge.

K. John. Is that the elder, and art thou the heir ?
You came not of one mother, then, it seems.

Bast. Most certain of one mother, mighty King,
That is well known ; and, as I think, one father :
But for the certain knowledge of that truth,
I put you o'er to Heaven and to my mother.

Eli. Out on thee, rude man ! thou dost shame thy mother
And wound her honour with this diffidence.

Bast. I, madam ? no, I have no reason for it :
That is my brother's plea, and none of mine ;
The which if he can prove, 'a pops me out

At least from fair five hundred pound a year :
Heaven guard my mother's honour and my land !

K. John. A good blunt fellow. — Why, being younger born,
Doth he lay claim to thine inheritance ?

Bast. I know not why, except to get the land.
But once he slander'd me with bastardy :
But whêr⁶ I be as true begot or no,
That still I lay upon my mother's head.

K. John. Why, what a madcap hath Heaven sent us here !

Eli. He hath a trick⁷ of Cœur-de-lion's face ;
The accent of his tongue affecteth him :⁸
Do you not read some tokens of my son
In the large composition of this man ?

K. John. Mine eye hath well examinéd his parts,
And finds them perfect Richard. — Sirrah, speak,
What doth move you to claim your brother's land ?

Bast. Because he hath a half-face, like my father,
With that half-face would he have all my land :
A half-faced groat⁹ five hundred pound a year !

Rob. My gracious liege, when that my father lived,
Your brother did employ my father much, —

Bast. Well, sir, by this you cannot get my land.

Rob. — And once dispatch'd him in an embassy

⁶ A frequent contraction of *whether*.

⁷ *Trick*, as here used, is properly an heraldic term for *mark* or *note* ; hence meaning a peculiarity of countenance or expression.

⁸ To *affect* a thing is, in one sense, to *draw* or *incline* towards it ; that is, to *resemble* it. The meaning here is, that the Bastard's speech has a *smack* of his alleged father's.

⁹ The groats of Henry VII. differed from other coins in having a *half-face*, or profile, instead of a full-face. Hence the phrase *half-faced groat* came to be used of a meagre visage. So in *The Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntingdon*, 1601 : " You *half-fac'd groat*, you thin-cheek'd chitty face."

To Germany, there with the Emperor
To treat of high affairs touching that time.
Th' advantage of his absence took the King,
And in the mean time sojourn'd at my father's.
Upon his death-bed he by will bequeath'd
His lands to me ; and took it on his death,¹⁰
That this my mother's son was none of his :
Then, good my liege, let me have what is mine,
My father's land, as was my father's will.

K. John. Sirrah, your brother is legitimate,
Your father's wife did after wedlock bear him :
Your father's heir must have your father's land.

Rob. Shall, then, my father's will be of no force
To dispossess that child which is not his?

Eli. Whêr hadst thou rather,¹¹ be a Falconbridge,
And like thy brother, to enjoy thy land,
Or the reputed son of Cœur-de-lion,
Lord of thy presence,¹² and no land besides?

Bast. Madam, an if my brother had my shape,
And I had his, Sir Robert his,¹³ like him ;

¹⁰ This appears to have been a common form of making oath, or swearing to a thing. So in *1 Henry IV.*, v. 4: "I'll *take it upon my death*, I gave him this wound in the thigh."

¹¹ *Whêr*, again, for *whether*. And in alternative questions *whether* is often used as equivalent to *which*, or *which of the two*. So that the meaning here is, "Which wouldst thou prefer, to be a Falconbridge," &c.

¹² *Presence* is here equivalent to *person* ; and the meaning is lord *in right of* thy own person. The lord of a thing is, properly, the *owner* of it ; and lords are commonly such in virtue of the lands and titles that belong to them. As the son of a king, Falconbridge will be a lord by personal right, whether he has any lands or not. Sir Henry Wotton's *Happy Man* has a similar expression : "Lord of himself, though not of lands."

¹³ *Sir Robert his* is merely equivalent to *Sir Robert's* ; *his* being the old sign of the genitive.

And if my legs were two such riding-rods,
My arms such eel-skins stuff'd ; my face so thin,
That in mine ear I durst not stick a rose,
Lest men should say, *Look, where three-farthings goes !*¹⁴
And, to¹⁵ his shape, were heir to all this land ;
Would I might never stir from off this place,
I'd give it every foot to have this face :
I would not be Sir Nob in any case.

Eli. I like thee well : wilt thou forsake thy fortune,
Bequeath thy land to him, and follow me ?
I am a soldier, and now bound to France.

Bast. Brother, take you my land, I'll take my chance :
Your face hath got five hundred pound a year ;
Yet sell your face for five pence, and 'tis dear. —
Madam, I'll follow you unto the death.

Eli. Nay, I would have you go before me thither.

Bast. Our country manners give our betters way.

K. John. What is thy name ?

Bast. Philip, my liege, — so is my name begun, —
Philip, good old Sir Robert's wife's eld'st son.

K. John. From henceforth bear his name whose form
thou bear'st :

Kneel thou down Philip, but arise more great, —
Arise Sir Richard and Plantagenet.¹⁶

¹⁴ Alluding to the three-farthing pieces of Elizabeth, which, being of silver, were of course very thin. These pieces had a profile of the Queen on the obverse side, and a rose on the reverse. Staunton notes that, "as with the profile of the sovereign it bore the emblem of a rose, its similitude to a weazen-faced beau with that flower stuck in his ear, according to a courtly fashion of Shakespeare's day, is sufficiently intelligible and humorous."

¹⁵ Here *to* has the force of *in addition to* ; a frequent usage.

¹⁶ *Plantagenet* was originally an epithet conferred upon a member of the House of Anjou from his wearing a stalk of the broom-plant, *planta genista*, in his cap or bonnet.

Bast. Brother by th' mother's side, give me your hand :
My father gave me honour, yours gave land.

Eli. The very spirit of Plantagenet ! —
I am thy grandam, Richard ; call me so.

Bast. Madam, by chance, but not by truth : what though ?
Something about, a little from the right,¹⁷
In at the window, or else o'er the hatch ;¹⁸
Who dares not stir by day must walk by night ;
And have is have, however men do catch ;
Near or far off, well won is still well shot.

K. John. Go, Falconbridge : now hast thou thy desire ;
A landless knight makes thee a landed squire. —
Come, madam, — and come, Richard ; we must speed
For France, for France ; for it is more than need.

Bast. Brother, adieu : good fortune come to thee ! —

[*Exeunt all but the Bastard.*]

A foot of honour better than I was,
But many a many foot of land the worse.

Well, now can I make any Joan a lady :

*Good den,*¹⁹ *Sir Richard* : — *God-a-mercy, fellow !*

¹⁷ That is, "I am your grandson, though, to be sure, somewhat *irregularly* so ; but that matters little, since what a man has, he has, however he came by it ; and, in a shooting-match, it makes no difference whether one hits close or wide of the mark, so long as he wins the game." Such is in substance Johnson's explanation. Here, as often, *truth* is put for *honesty*. So *true man* often means *honest man*.

¹⁸ These were proverbial phrases applied to persons born illegitimately. So in *The Family of Love*, 1608 : "Woe worth the time that ever I gave suck to a child that *came in at a window*." And in *The Witches of Lancashire*, 1634 : "I would not have you think I scorn my grannam's cat to *leap over the hatch*."

¹⁹ *Good den* was a common colloquialism for *good even*. — *God-a-mercy* is an old colloquialism for *God have mercy* ; that is, "God *pardon me*." Here it stands as a sort of apology for non-recognition. — *Joan*, in the line before, is used as a common term meaning about the same as *wench*.

And if his name be George, I'll call him Peter ;
 For new-made honour doth forget men's names ;
 'Tis too respective and too sociable
 For your conversion.²⁰ Now your traveller, —
 He and his toothpick at my Worship's mess ;
 And, when my knightly stomach is sufficed,
 Why, then I suck my teeth, and catechize
 My pickèd man, of countries :²¹ *My dear sir,*
 Thus, leaning on mine elbow, I begin,
I shall beseech you — that is Question now ;

²⁰ *Conversion* here means *change of condition*, such as the speaker has just undergone in being transferred to a higher rank. *Respective* is *mindful* or *considerate* ; a very frequent usage. The language of the passage is elliptical ; the meaning being, that *remembering men's names* implies too much thought of others, and too much community of feeling, for one that has just been lifted into nobility of rank. The Bastard is ridiculing the affectations of aristocratic greenhorns. See Critical Notes.

²¹ *Pickèd* is *scrupulously nice, fastidious, or coxcombical* ; as in *Love's Labours Lost*, v. 1 : " He is too *picked*, too spruce, too odd, too affected, as it were, too peregrinate." " My picked man " here is a man who pranks up his behaviour with foreign airs, or what may pass for such ; and the meaning is, catechize him of, or *about*, the countries he claims to have seen. In Shakespeare's time, which was an age of newly-awakened curiosity, with but small means of gratifying it, travellers were much welcomed to the tables of the rich and noble, for the instruction and entertainment of their talk. This naturally drew on a good deal of imposture from such as were more willing to wag their tongues than to work with their hands. It seems that the tooth-pick was wont to cut a prominent figure in the conduct of such persons. So in Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, ii. 1 : " Amorphus, a traveller, one so made out of the mixture of shreds of forms, that himself is truly deform'd. He walks most commonly with a clove or pick-tooth in his mouth ; he is the mint of compliment ; all his behaviours are printed," &c. Also in Overbury's *Characters* : " His attire speakes French or Italian, and his gate cries, *Behold me*. He censures all things by countenances and shrugs, and speakes his own language with shame and lispings ; he will choake rather than confess beere good drinke ; and his pick-tooth is a maine part of his behaviour."

And then comes Answer like an A B C-book : ²²
O sir, says Answer, at your best command ;
At your employment ; at your service, sir :
No, sir, says Question ; I, sweet sir, at yours :
 And so, ere Answer knows what Question would, —
 Saving in dialogue of compliment,
 And talking of the Alps and Appennines,
 The Pyrenean and the river Po, —
 It draws toward supper in conclusion so.
 But this is worshipful society,
 And fits the mounting spirit like myself ;
 For he is but a bastard to the time,
 That doth not smack of observation : ²³
 And so am I, — whether I smack or no, —
 And not alone in habit and device,
 Exterior form, outward accoutrement,
 But from the inward motion, to deliver
 Sweet, sweet, sweet poison for the age's tooth : ²⁴
 Which, though I will not practise to deceive,
 Yet, to avoid deceit, I mean to learn ; ²⁵

²² *A B C-book* was for teaching children their letters, *catechism*, &c.

²³ The meaning is, that the present time thinks scorn of a man who does not show by his dress and manners that he has travelled abroad, and observed the world. Sir Richard here uses *bastard* in a double sense ; for one born illegitimately, and also for one that the time regards as *base*, that is, low-born or low-bred.

²⁴ Something of obscurity here, perhaps. But I take the infinitive *to deliver* as depending upon *I am*. *Motion* is *motive*, or *moving power* ; and "*inward motion*" is an honest, genuine impulse or purpose in antithesis to the mere externals spoken of just before. So that Sir Richard means that he is going to humour the world in his outward man, and at the same time be thoroughly sound within ; or that he will *appear* what the age craves, and yet *be* what he ought.

²⁵ The *which*, in this latter member of the sentence, I understand as referring to the whole sense of the preceding member. The speaker means

For it shall strew the footsteps of my rising.
 But who comes in such haste in riding-robcs?
 What woman-post is this? hath she no husband,
 That will take pains to blow a horn before her?²⁶

Enter Lady FALCONBRIDGE and JAMES GURNEY.

O me ! it is my mother. — How now, good lady !
 What brings you here to Court so hastily ?

Lady F. Where is that slave, thy brother ? where is he
 That holds in chase mine honour up and down ?

Bast. My brother Robert ? old Sir Robert's son ?
 Colbrand the giant,²⁷ that same mighty man ?
 Is it Sir Robert's son that you seek so ?

Lady F. Sir Robert's son ! Ay, thou unreverend boy,
 Sir Robert's son : why scorn'st thou at Sir Robert ?
 He is Sir Robert's son ; and so art thou.

Bast. James Gurney, wilt thou give us leave awhile ?

Gur. Good leave, good Philip.

Bast. *Philip ! sparrow !*²⁸ James,

to learn the arts of popularity, and to practise them, not hollowly, that he may cheat the people, or play the demagogue, but from the heart, and that he may be an overmatch for the cheats and demagogues about him. The Poet here prepares us for the honest and noble part which Falconbridge takes in the play ; giving us an early inside taste of this most downright and forthright humourist, who delights in a sort of righteous or inverted hypocrisy, talking like a knave, and acting like a hero.

²⁶ A double allusion, to the horns blown by postmen, and to such horns as Lady Falconbridge has endowed her husband with. See *The Merchant*, page 184, note 9.

²⁷ The famous Danish giant whom Guy of Warwick vanquished in the presence of King Athelstan. The History of Guy was a popular book.

²⁸ The sparrow was called Philip, because its note resembles that name. So in Lyly's *Mother Bombie* : "*Phip, phip*, the sparrows as they fly." And Catullus, in his elegy on Lesbia's sparrow, formed the verb *pipilabat*, to express the note of that bird. The new Sir Richard tosses off the name *Philip* with affected contempt.

There's toys²⁹ abroad : anon I'll tell thee more. —

[*Exit GURNEY.*]

Madam, I was not old Sir Robert's son ;

Sir Robert might have eat his part in me

Upon Good-Friday, and ne'er broke his fast.

Lady F. Hast thou conspirèd with thy brother too,
That for thine own gain shouldst defend mine honour ?
What means this scorn, thou most untoward knave ?

Bast. Knight, knight, good mother, — Basilisco-like :³⁰
What ! I am dubb'd ; I have it on my shoulder.

But, mother, I am not Sir Robert's son ;

I have disclaim'd Sir Robert ; and my land,

Legitimation, name, and all is gone :

Then, good my mother,³¹ let me know my father ;

Some proper³² man, I hope : who was it, mother ?

Lady F. Hast thou denied thyself a Falconbridge ?

Bast. As faithfully as I deny the Devil.

Lady F. King Richard Cœur-de-lion was thy father :
Heaven lay not my transgression to thy charge !

Bast. Madam, I would not wish a better father.
Needs must you lay your heart at his dispose,

²⁹ *Toys* sometimes means *rumours* or *idle reports* : here it probably means *slight changes* or *novelties* ; alluding humorously to the changes in the speaker's name and rank.

³⁰ Referring to the old play of *Solyman and Perseda*, 1599, in which there is a bragging, cowardly knight called Basilisco. Piston, a buffoon, jumps upon his back, and forces him to take an oath as "the aforesaid Basilisco" ; whereupon he says, "I, the aforesaid Basilisco, — *knight*, good fellow, *knight*" ; and Piston replies, "*Knave*, good fellow, *knave*."

³¹ We should say, "my good mother." Such inversions occur very often all through these plays. So we have "dread my lord," "sweet my sister," "gentle my brother," "gracious my mother," &c.

³² *Proper* is *handsome*, *fine-looking* ; such being then the more common meaning of the word.

Against whose fury and unmatched force
 The awless lion could not wage the fight,
 Nor keep his princely heart from Richard's hand:
 He that perforce robs lions of their hearts³³
 May easily win a woman's. Ay, my mother,
 With all my heart I thank thee for my father!

ACT II.

SCENE I. — *France. Before the Walls of Angiers.*

Enter, on one side, PHILIP, King of France, LOUIS, CONSTANCE, ARTHUR, and Forces; on the other, the Archduke of AUSTRIA and Forces.

K. Phi. Before Angiers well met, brave Austria! —
 Arthur, that great forerunner of thy blood,
 Richard, that robb'd the lion of his heart,
 And fought the holy wars in Palestine,
 By this brave Duke came early to his grave:¹

³³ It is sayd that a lyon was put to Kynge Richarde, beynge in prison, to have devoured him; and, when the lyon was gapyng, he put his arm in his mouthe, and pulled the lyon by the harte so hard, that he slew the lyon; and therefore some say he is called Rycharde Cure de Lyon: but some say he is called Cure de Lyon because of his boldnesse and hardy stomake. — RASTALL'S *Chronicle*.

¹ In point of fact, Leopold, the Duke of Austria who imprisoned Richard, died by a fall from his horse in 1195, four years before John came to the throne; and Richard fell by the hand of the Viscount of Limoges, one of his own vassals. But Shakespeare, following the old play, makes Limoges and Austria the same person. So in iii. 1: "O *Limoges!* O *Austria!* thou dost shame that bloody spoil." And in the old play: "The Bastard chaseth *Lymoges the Austrich Duke*, and maketh him leave the lyon's skin."

And, for amends to his posterity,
At our importance² hither is he come,
To spread his colours, boy, in thy behalf;
And to rebuke the usurpation
Of thy unnatural uncle, English John :
Embrace him, love him, give him welcome hither.

Arth. God shall forgive you Cœur-de-lion's death
The rather that you give his offspring life,
Shadowing their right under your wings of war :
I give you welcome with a powerless hand,
But with a heart full of unstained love :³
Welcome before the gates of Angiers, Duke.

K. Phi. A noble boy ! Who would not do thee right ?

Aust. Upon thy cheek lay I this zealous kiss,
As seal to this indenture⁴ of my love ;
That to my home I will no more return,
Till Angiers, and the right thou hast in France,
Together with that pale, that white-faced shore,
Whose foot spurns back the ocean's roaring tides,
And coops from other lands her islanders, —
Even till that England, hedged in with the main,
That water-walled bulwark, still secure
And confident from foreign purposes, —

² *Importance* for *importunity*; a frequent usage. See *Twelfth Night*, page 136, note 29.

³ We have an instance of similar language in *Pericles*, i. 1: "My unspotted fire of love." Also near the close of this play: "And the like tender of our love we make, to rest *without a spot* for evermore."

⁴ An *indenture* is, properly, a written contract drawn in duplicate on one piece of parchment, and then two copies cut with *indentations*, so as to guard against counterfeits. Setting the *seal* to such an instrument was the finishing stroke of the process, and made the contract good in law. — In the third line after, "that pale, that white-faced shore" refers to the chalky cliffs at Dover which from the opposite coast appear as a whitened wall.

Even till that utmost corner of the West
Salute thee for her king : till then, fair boy,
Will I not think of home, but follow arms.

Const. O, take his mother's thanks, a widow's thanks,
Till your strong hand shall help to give him strength
To make a more⁵ requital to your love !

Aust. The peace of Heaven is theirs that lift their swords
In such a just and charitable war.

K. Phi. Well, then, to work : our cannon shall be bent
Against the brows of this resisting town. —
Call for our chiefest men of discipline,
To cull the plots of best advantages :⁶
We'll lay before this town our royal bones,
Wade to the market-place in Frenchmen's blood,
But we will make it subject to this boy.

Const. Stay for an answer to your embassy,
Lest unadvised you stain your swords with blood :
My Lord Chatillon may from England bring
That right in peace which here we urge in war ;
And then we shall repent each drop of blood
That hot rash haste so indirectly⁷ shed.

K. Phi. A wonder, lady ; lo, upon thy wish,
Our messenger Chatillon is arrived ! —

Enter CHATILLON.

What England says, say briefly, gentle lord ;

⁵ *More* in the sense of *greater*. So in *1 Henry IV.*, iv. 3 : "The *more* and less came in with cap and knee."

⁶ That is, to select the most advantageous places for assault.

⁷ *Indirectly* in the Latin sense of *indirectus* ; that is, *wrongfully*. Such a wanton or needless shedding of blood would be *unrighteous* ; so Constance thinks.

We coldly pause for thee ; Chatillon, speak.

Chat. Then turn your forces from this paltry siege,
And stir them up against a mightier task.
England, impatient of your just demands,
Hath put himself in arms : the adverse winds,
Whose leisure I have stay'd,⁸ have given him time
To land his legions all as soon as I ;
His marches are expedient⁹ to this town,
His forces strong, his soldiers confident.
With him along is come the mother-queen,
An Até,¹⁰ stirring him to blood and strife ;
With her, her niece, the Lady Blanch of Spain ;
With them, a bastard of the King deceased :
And all th' unsettled humours of the land, —
Rash, inconsiderate, fiery voluntaries,
With ladies' faces and fierce dragons' spleens,¹¹ —
Have sold their fortunes at their native homes,
Bearing their birthrights¹² proudly on their backs,
To make a hazard of new fortunes here :
In brief, a braver choice of dauntless spirits,
Than now the English bottoms have waft¹³ o'er,
Did never float upon the swelling tide,
To do offence and scathe in Christendom.
The interruption of their churlish drums [*Drums within.*]

⁸ The winds whose *quietness*, or whose *subsiding*, I have waited for.

⁹ *Expedient* for *rapid* or *expeditious* ; a common usage in the Poet's time. See *Richard III.*, page 61, note 18.

¹⁰ Até was the goddess of discord, the unholy spirit of hate.

¹¹ The *spleen* was supposed to be the special seat of the electric and gun-powder passions. See *A Midsummer*, page 29, note 17.

¹² A *birthright*, as the word is here used, is an *inherited estate*.

¹³ *Waft* for *wasted*. The Poet has many preterites formed the same way, such as *quit*, *hoist*, &c. See *The Tempest*, page 56, note 43.

Cuts off more circumstance :¹⁴ they are at hand,
To parley or to fight ; therefore prepare.

K. Phi. How much unlook'd for is this expedition !¹⁵

Aust. By how much unexpected, by so much
We must awake endeavour for defence ;
For courage mounteth with occasion ;
Let them be welcome, then ; we are prepared.

Enter King JOHN, ELINOR, BLANCH, the Bastard, Lords, and Forces.

K. John. Peace be to France, if France in peace permit
Our just and lineal entrance to our own !
If not, bleed France, and peace ascend to Heaven !
Whiles we, God's wrathful agent, do correct
Their proud contempt that beat his peace to Heaven.

K. Phi. Peace be to England, if that war return
From France to England, there to live in peace !
England we love ; and for that England's sake
With burden of our armour here we sweat.
'This toil of ours should be a work of thine ;
But thou from loving England art so far,
'That thou hast under-wrought¹⁶ his lawful King,
Cut off the sequence of posterity,
Out-faced infant state, and done a rape
Upon the maiden virtue of the crown.
Look here upon thy brother Geffrey's face :
'These eyes, these brows, were moulded out of his :
'This little abstract doth contain that large

¹⁴ *Circumstance* for particulars, or circumstantial detail. Often so. See *The Merchant*, page 87, note 33.

¹⁵ *Expedition* in the same sense as *expedient*, a little before ; *speed* or *swiftness*.

¹⁶ *Under-wrought* for *undermined* ; supplanted by *underhand* practices.

Which died in Geffrey ;¹⁷ and the hand of time
Shall draw this brief into as huge a volume.

'That Geffrey was thy elder brother born,
And this his son ; England was Geffrey's right,
And his is Geffrey's :¹⁸ in the name of God,
How comes it, then, that thou art call'd a king,
When living blood doth in these temples beat,
Which owe¹⁹ the crown that thou o'ermasterest?

K. John. From whom hast thou this great commission,
France,

To draw my answer to thy articles?

K. Phi. From that supernal Judge that stirs good thoughts
In any breast of strong authority,
To look into the blots and stains of right.
That Judge hath made me guardian to this boy :
Under whose warrant I impeach thy wrong ;
And by whose help I mean to chastise it.

K. John. Alack, thou dost usurp authority.

K. Phi. Excuse, — it is to beat usurping down.

Eli. Who is it thou dost call usurper, France?

Const. Let me make answer ; — thy usurping son.

Eli. Out, insolent ! thy bastard shall be king,
That thou mayst be a queen, and check the world !²⁰

Const. My heart was ever to thy son as true

¹⁷ This miniature contains, in little, that which died large, or full-grown, in Geffrey. *Abstract* here means the same as *brief* in the next clause.

¹⁸ Meaning that whatever was Geffrey's is now his, that is, Arthur's. The sense would be clearer if the order of the words were inverted. See Critical Notes.

¹⁹ *Owe* for *own*, *possess* ; continually so in Shakespeare.

²⁰ " The allusion," says Staunton, " is obviously to the *Queen* of the chess-board, which, in this country, was invested with those remarkable powers that rendered her by far the most powerful piece of the game, somewhere about the second decade of the 16th century."

As thine was to thy husband ; and this boy
 Likier in feature to his father Geffrey
 Than thou and John in manners ; being as like
 As rain to water, or devil to his dam.

Aust. Peace !

Bast. Hear the crier.²¹

Aust. What the Devil art thou ?

Bast. One that will play the Devil, sir, with you,
 And 'a may catch your hide and you alone :²²
 You are the hare of whom the proverb goes,
 Whose valour plucks dead lions by the beard :²³
 I'll smoke your skin-coat, an I catch you right ;
 Sirrah, look to't ; i'faith, I will, i'faith.

Blanch. O, well did he become that lion's robe
 That did disrobe the lion of that robe !

Bast. It lies as sightly on the back of him
 As great Alcides' does upon an ass : —
 But, ass, I'll take that burden from your back,
 Or lay on that shall make your shoulders crack.

²¹ Alluding to the order for silence proclaimed by criers in courts of justice. The Bastard is baiting Austria.

²² What most of all kindles the wrath of Falconbridge against Austria is, that the latter, after having caused the death of King Richard, now wears the lion's hide which had belonged to that prince. In the old play Falconbridge is made to exclaim, " My father's foe clad in my father's spoyle ! " — The 'a in this line is an old colloquialism for *he* or *she*, much used in the Poet's time. So in the preceding scene : " The which if he can prove, 'a pops me out," &c.

²³ This proverb is met with in the *Adagia* of Erasmus : " Mortuo leoni et lepores insultant." So in *The Spanish Tragedy* : " So hares may pull dead lions by the beard." — *Smoke*, in the next line, is an old provincialism for to *cudgel*, to *drub*, or *thrash*. So Cotgrave's *Dictionary* : " *L'en aury*, — blowes being understood, — I shall be well beaten ; my skin-coat will be soundly curried." This explanation is Halliwell's.

Aust. What cracker²⁴ is this same that deafs our ears
With this abundance of superfluous breath?—
King Philip, determine what we shall do straight.

K. Phi. Women and fools, break off your conference.—
King John, this is the very sum of all,
England and Ireland, Anjou, Touraine, Maine,
In right of Arthur do I claim of thee :
Wilt thou resign them, and lay down thy arms?

K. John. My life as soon ! I do defy thee, France.—
Arthur of Bretagne, yield thee to my hand ;
And, out of my dear love, I'll give thee more
Than e'er the coward hand of France can win :
Submit thee, boy.

Eli. Come to thy grandam, child.

Const. Do, child, go to it²⁵ grandam, child ;
Give grandam kingdom, and it' grandam will
Give it a plum, a cherry, and a fig ;
There's a good grandam.

Arth. Good my mother, peace !
I would that I were low laid in my grave :
I am not worth this coil²⁶ that's made for me.

Eli. His mother shames him so, poor boy, he weeps.

²⁴ *Cracker* for *boaster* ; of course with a punning allusion to the word *crack* used just before. So we often speak of *cracking up* a thing ; that is, *bragging* of it. And so in *Cymbeline*, v. 5 : " Our *brags* were *crack'd* of kitchen-trulls," &c.

²⁵ Shakespeare has many instances of *it* used possessively, for *its*, which was not then an accepted word. In such cases, modern editors generally, and justly, print *its* instead of *it*. The text, however, should probably pass as an exception to the rule, since, as Lettsom remarks, " Constance here is evidently mimicking the imperfect babble of the nursery." Doubtless we have all heard *it* so used in " baby talk."

²⁶ *Coil* is *bustle*, *tumult*, or *fuss*. Often so. See *Much Ado*, page 121, note 7.

Const. Now shame upon you, whêr she does or no !
His grandam's wrongs, and not his mother's shames,
Draw those Heaven-moving pearls from his poor eyes,
Which Heaven shall take in nature of a fee ;
Ay, with these crystal beads Heaven shall be bribed
To do him justice, and revenge on you.

Eli. Thou monstrous slanderer of Heaven and Earth !

Const. Thou monstrous injurer of Heaven and Earth !
Call not me slanderer ; thou and thine usurp
The dominations, royalties, and rights
Of this oppressèd boy, thy eld'st son's son,
Infortunate in nothing but in thee :
Thy sins are visited in this poor child ;
The canon of the law is laid on him,
Being but the second generation
Removèd from thy sin-conceiving womb.

K. John. Bedlam, have done.

Const. I have but this to say,
That he's not only plagued for her sin,
But God hath made her sin and her the plague
On this removèd issue ; — plagued for her,
And with²⁷ her plagued ; her sin his injury ;
Her injury the beadle²⁸ to her sin :

²⁷ Shakespeare often uses *with* where the present idiom requires *by*; as in *Julius Cæsar*, iii. 2: "Here is himself, marr'd, as you see, *with* traitors." — Constance still has in mind the words of the second Commandment, "visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation." And she means, that Arthur not only suffers in consequence of Elinor's crime, or on her account, but is also plagued by her, as the direct agent or instrument of his sufferings.

²⁸ The *bradle* is the officer who, as the sheriff with us, executes the sentence of the court upon persons condemned. The meaning is, that Elinor's sin draws evil upon Arthur, and that her sin is moreover the executioner of that evil.

All punish'd in the person of this child,
And all for her. A plague upon her !

Eli. Thou unadvisèd²⁹ scold, I can produce
A will that bars the title of thy son.

Const. Ay, who doubts that? a will ! a wicked will ;
A woman's will ; a canker'd³⁰ grandam's will !

K. Phi. Peace, lady ! pause, or be more temperate :
It ill beseems this presence to cry aim³¹
To these ill-tunèd repetitions. —

Some trumpet summon hither to the walls
These men of Angiers : let us hear them speak,
Whose title they admit, Arthur's or John's.

Trumpet sounds. Enter Citizens upon the walls.

1 Cit. Who is it that hath warn'd us to the walls?

K. Phi. 'Tis France, for England.

K. John. England, for itself.

You men of Angiers, and my loving subjects, —

K. Phi. You loving men of Angiers, Arthur's subjects,
Our trumpet call'd you to this gentle parle, —

K. John. For our advantage ; therefore hear us first.
These flags of France, that are advancèd here
Before the eye and prospect of your town,
Have hither march'd to your endamagement :
The cannons have their bowels full of wrath,
And ready mounted are they to spit forth

²⁹ *Unadvised* here means *inconsiderate, reckless, or rash*. So the Poet often has *advised* for *considerate* or *careful*. So *unadvised* in the preceding scene: "Lest *unadvised* you stain your swords with blood." See, also, *Richard III.*, page 168, note 30.

³⁰ Here *canker'd* probably means *malignant*; as in *cancer*, a malignant sore. See *The Tempest*, page 127, note 41.

³¹ To *cry aim* was a term in archery, meaning to *encourage* or *instigate*.

Their iron indignation 'gainst your walls :
All preparation for a bloody siege
And merciless proceeding by these French
Confront your city's eyes, your winking gates ;
And, but for our approach, those sleeping stones,
'That as a waist do girdle you about,
By the compulsion of their ordinance³²
By this time from their fixèd beds of lime
Had been dishabited, and wide havoc made
For bloody power to rush upon your peace.
But, on the sight of us, your lawful King, —
Who painfully, with much expedient march,
Have brought a countercheck before your gates,
'To save unscratch'd your city's threaten'd cheeks, —
Behold, the French, amazed, vouchsafe a parle ;
And now, instead of bullets wrapp'd in fire,
To make a shaking fever in your walls,
'They shoot but calm words, folded up in smoke,
'To make a faithless error in your ears :
Which trust accordingly, kind citizens,
And let us in, your King ; whose labour'd spirits,
Forwearied in this action of swift speed,
Crave harbourage within your city-walls.

K. *Phi.* When I have said, make answer to us both.
Lo, in this right hand, whose protection
Is most divinely vow'd upon the right
Of him it holds, stands young Plantagenet,
Son to the elder brother of this man,
And king o'er him, and all that he enjoys :

³² *Ordinance* for *ordnance*. The Poet uses it so, where the verse wants a trisyllable. — *Dishabited*, second line below, is *dislodged*.

For this down-trodden equity, we tread
In warlike march these greens³³ before your town ;
Being no further enemy to you
Than the constraint of hospitable zeal
In the relief of this oppressèd child
Religiously provokes. Be pleasèd, then,
To pay that duty which you truly owe
To him that owes³⁴ it, namely, this young Prince :
And then our arms, like to a muzzled bear,
Save in aspéct, have all offence seal'd up ;
Our cannons' malice vainly shall be spent
Against th' invulnerable clouds of heaven ;
And with a blessèd and unvex'd retire,
With unhack'd swords and helmets all unbruised,
We will bear home that lusty blood again
Which here we came to spout against your town,
And leave your children, wives, and you in peace.
But, if you fondly pass our proffer'd peace,
'Tis not the rondure³⁵ of your old-faced walls
Can hide you from our messengers of war,
Though all these English, and their discipline,
Were harbour'd in their rude circumference.
Then, tell us, shall your city call us lord,
In that behalf which we have challenged it ?
Or shall we give the signal to our rage,
And stalk in blood to our possession ?

1 *Cit.* In brief, we are the King of England's subjects :

³³ "*Greens* for *plants*, or vegetation in general," says Walker.

³⁴ *Owes* for *owns*, while *owe*, in the preceding line, has the present meaning of that word.

³⁵ *Rondure* is *circle* or *girdle*; from the French *rondeur*. — *Fondly*, line before, is *foolishly*; a common usage.

For him, and in his right, we hold this town.

K. John. Acknowledge, then, the King, and let me in.

I Cit. That can we not ; but he that proves the King,
To him will we prove loyal : till that time
Have we ramm'd up our gates against the world.

K. John. Doth not the crown of England prove the King?
And if not that, I bring you witnesses,

Twice fifteen thousand hearts of England's breed,—

Bast. Bastards, and else.

K. John. —To verify our title with their lives.

K. Phi. As many and as well-born bloods as those,—

Bast. Some bastards too.

K. Phi. —Stand in his face, to contradict his claim.

I Cit. Till you compound whose right is worthiest,
We for the worthiest hold the right from both.

K. John. Then God forgive the sin of all those souls
That to their everlasting residence,
Before the dew of evening fall, shall fleet,
In dreadful trial of our kingdom's King !

K. Phi. Amen, amen !—Mount, chevaliers ! to arms !

Bast. Saint George, that swung the dragon, and e'er
since

Sits on his horse' back at mine hostess' door,³⁶

Teach us some fence !—[*To Aust.*] Sirrah, were I at home,
At your den, sirrah, with your lioness,
I'd set an ox-head to your lion's hide,
And make a monster of you.

Aust. Peace ! no more.

Bast. O, tremble, for you hear the lion roar !

K. John. Up higher to the plain ; where we'll set forth

³⁶ Pictures of Saint George armed and mounted, as when he overthrew the Dragon, were used for innkeepers' signs.

In best appointment all our regiments.

Bast. Speed, then, to take advantage of the field.

K. Phi. It shall be so ;— [*To LOUIS.*] and at the other hill
Command the rest to stand.—God and our right !

[*Exeunt, severally, the English and French Kings, &c.*

*After excursions, enter a French Herald, with trumpets, to
the gates.*

F. Her. You men of Angiers, open wide your gates,
And let young Arthur, Duke of Bretagne, in,
Who, by the hand of France, this day hath made
Much work for tears in many an English mother,
Whose sons lie scatter'd on the bleeding ground :
Many a widow's husband grovelling lies,
Coldly embracing the discolour'd earth ;
And victory, with little loss, doth play
Upon the dancing banners of the French,
Who are at hand, triumphantly display'd,
To enter conquerors, and to proclaim
Arthur of Bretagne England's King and yours.

Enter an English Herald, with trumpets.

E. Her. Rejoice, you men of Angiers, ring your bells ;
King John, your King and England's, doth approach,
Commander of this hot malicious day :
Their armours, that march'd hence so silver-bright,
Hither return all gilt with Frenchmen's blood ;³⁷
There stuck no plume in any English crest
That is removèd by a staff of France ;

³⁷ The phrase *gilded* or *gilt with blood* was common. So in Chapman's *Iliad*, book xvi. : "The curets from great Hector's breast all *gilded* with his *gore*."

Our colours do return in those same hands
That did display them when we first march'd forth ;
And, like a jolly troop of huntsmen, come
Our lusty English, all with purpled hands,
Dyed in the dying slaughter of their foes : ³⁸
Open your gates, and give the victors way.

1 Cit. Heralds, from off our towers we might behold,
From first to last, the onset and retire
Of both your armies ; whose equality
By our best eyes cannot be censur'd :
Blood hath bought blood, and blows have answer'd blows ;
Strength match'd with strength, and power confronted power :
Both are alike ; and both alike we like.
One must prove greatest : while they weigh so even,
We hold our town for neither ; yet for both.

Re-enter, on one side, King JOHN, ELINOR, BLANCH, the Bastard, Lords, and Forces ; on the other, King PHILIP, LOUIS, AUSTRIA, and Forces.

K. John. France, hast thou yet more blood to cast away ?
Say, shall the current of our right run on ?
Whose passage, vex'd with thy impediment,
Shall leave his native channel, and o'erswell
With course disturb'd even thy confining shores,
Unless thou let his silver waters keep
A peaceful progress to the ocean.

K. Phi. England, thou hast not saved one drop of blood,
In this hot trial, more than we of France ;
Rather, lost more : and by this hand I swear,

³⁸ It appears that, at the conclusion of a deer-hunt, the huntsmen used to stain their hands with the blood of the deer as a trophy.

That sways the earth this climate overlooks,
Before we will lay down our just-borne arms,
We'll put thee down, 'gainst whom these arms we bear,
Or add a royal number to the dead,
Gracing the scroll that tells of this war's loss
With slaughter coupled to the name of kings.

Bast. Ha, Majesty ! how high thy glory³⁹ towers,
When the rich blood of kings is set on fire !
O, now doth Death line his dead chops with steel ;
The swords of soldiers are his teeth, his fangs ;
And now he feasts, mousing⁴⁰ the flesh of men,
In undetermined differences of kings. —
Why stand these royal fronts amazèd thus ?
Cry *havoc*,⁴¹ Kings ! back to the stainèd field,
You equal-potent, fiery-kindled spirits !
Then let confusion of one part confirm
The other's peace ; till then, blows, blood, and death !

K. John. Whose party do the townsmen yet admit ?

K. Phi. Speak, citizens, for England ; who's your King ?

I Cit. The King of England, when we know the King.

K. Phi. Know him in us, that here hold up his right.

K. John. In us, that are our own great deputy,
And bear possession of our person here ;
Lord of our presence, Angiers, and of you.

I Cit. A greater Power than ye denies all this ;

³⁹ *Glory* for *glorying*, that is, *vaunting* ; one of the senses of the Latin *gloria*. A frequent usage.

⁴⁰ To *mouse* is to *tear in pieces*, or to *devour eagerly*. So in Dekker's *Wonderful Year*, 1603 : " Whilst Troy was swilling sack and sugar, and *mousing* fat venison, the mad Greeks made bonfires of their houses." See, also, *A Midsummer*, page 107, note 19.

⁴¹ Crying *havoc* ! in battle, was a signal for indiscriminate massacre, or for giving no quarter.

And, till it be undoubted, we do lock
 Our former scruple in our strong-barr'd gates ;
 King'd of our fears,⁴² until our fears, resolved,⁴³
 Be by some certain king purged and deposed.

Bast. By Heaven, these scroyles⁴⁴ of Angiers flout you,
 Kings,
 And stand securely on their battlements,
 As in a theatre, whence they gape and point
 At your industrious scenes and acts of death.
 Your royal presences be ruled by me :
 Do like the mutines⁴⁵ of Jerusalem,
 Be friends awhile, and both conjointly bend
 Your sharpest deeds of malice on this town :
 By east and west let France and England mount
 Their battering cannon, chargèd to the mouths,
 Till their soul-fearing⁴⁶ clamours have brawl'd down
 The flinty ribs of this contemptuous city :
 I'd play incessantly upon these jades,
 Even till unfencèd desolation
 Leave them as naked as the vulgar air.
 That done, dissever your united strengths,

⁴² " *King'd of our fears* " is the same as *ruled by our fears*. We have a like expression in *King Henry V.*, ii. 3: " For, my good liege, she [England] is so idly *king'd*."

⁴³ I am not quite sure as to the sense of *resolved* here. Sometimes the word, in Shakespeare, means to *inform*, *assure*, or *satisfy*; sometimes to *melt* or *dissolve*. The latter seems to accord best with the sense of *purged* and *deposed*.

⁴⁴ *Scroyles* is *scurvy rogues*; from the French *escrouelles*.

⁴⁵ *Mutines* for *mutineers*; as in *Hamlet*, v. 2: " Methought I lay worse than the *mutines* in the bulboes." The allusion is probably to the combination of the civil factions in Jerusalem when the city was threatened by Titus.

⁴⁶ *Soul-appalling*. The Poet often uses the verb to *fear* in the sense of *making afraid* or *scaring*.

And part your mingled colours once again ;
Turn face to face, and bloody point to point ;
Then, in a moment, Fortune shall cull forth
Out of one side her happy minion,
To whom in favour she shall give the day,
And kiss him with a glorious victory.
How like you this wild counsel, mighty states ?⁴⁷
Smacks it not something of the policy ?

K. John. Now, by the sky that hangs above our heads,
I like it well. — France, shall we knit our powers,
And lay this Angiers even with the ground ;
Then, after, fight who shall be king of it ?

Bast. An if thou hast the mettle of a king, —
Being wrong'd, as we are, by this peevish town, —
Turn thou the mouth of thy artillery,
As we will ours, against these saucy walls ;
And, when that we have dash'd them to the ground,
Why, then defy each other, and, pell-mell,
Make work upon ourselves, for Heaven or Hell.

K. Phi. Let it be so. — Say, where will you assault ?

K. John. We from the west will send destruction
Into this city's bosom.

Aust. I from the north.

K. Phi. Our thunders from the south
Shall rain their drift of bullets on this town.

Bast. [*Aside.*] O prudent discipline ! From north to
south,

⁴⁷ *States* here may be equivalent to *thrones*, the *chairs of state* being put for the *occupiers* of them. Sometimes *state* is used for *person of high rank* ; as in *Cymbeline*, iii. 4 : "Kings, queens, and *states*." — The meaning of the next line appears to be, "Is there not some smack of policy, or of *politic shrewdness*, in this counsel ?"

Austria and France shoot in each other's mouth :
I'll stir them to it. — Come, away, away !

1 Cit. Hear us, great Kings : vouchsafe awhile to stay,
And I shall show you peace and fair-faced league :
Win you this city without stroke or wound ;
Rescue those breathing lives to die in beds,
That here come sacrifices for the field :
Perséver not, but hear me, mighty Kings.

K. John. Speak on, with favour ; we are bent to hear.

1 Cit. That daughter there of Spain, the Lady Blanch,
Is niece to England :⁴⁸ look upon the years
Of Louis the Dauphin and that lovely maid :
If lusty love should go in quest of beauty,
Where should he find it fairer than in Blanch ?
If zealous love should go in search of virtue,
Where should he find it purer than in Blanch ?
If love ambitious sought a match of birth,
Whose veins bound richer blood than Lady Blanch ?
Such as she is, in beauty, virtue, birth,
Is the young Dauphin every way complete :
If not complete, then say he is not she ;
And she, again, wants nothing, to name want,
If want it be, but that she is not he :⁴⁹
He is the half part of a blessèd man,
Left to be finishèd by such a she ;
And she a fair divided excellence,
Whose fulness of perfection lies in him.

⁴⁸ Blanch was in fact daughter to Alphonso IX., King of Castile, and niece to King John by his sister Eleanor.

⁴⁹ The sense appears to be, " And she, again, wants nothing, but that she is not he ; if there be any thing wanting in her, and if it be right to speak of want in connection with her,"

O, two such silver currents, when they join,
 Do glorify the banks that bound them in ;
 And two such shores to two such streams made one,
 Two such controlling bounds shall you be, Kings,
 To these two Princes, if you marry them.
 This union shall do more than battery can
 To our fast-closèd gates ; for, at this match,
 With swifter spleen than powder can enforce,
 The mouth of passage shall we fling wide ope,
 And give you entrance : but, without this match,
 The sea enragèd is not half so deaf,
 Lions more confident, mountains and rocks
 More free from motion ; ⁵⁰ no, not Death himself
 In mortal fury half so peremptory,
 As we to keep this city.

Bast.

Here's a flaw,⁵¹

That shakes the rotten carcass of old Death
 Out of his rags ! Here's a large mouth, indeed,
 That spits forth death and mountains, rocks and seas ;
 Talks as familiarly of roaring lions
 As maids of thirteen do of puppy-dogs !
 What cannoneer begot this lusty blood ?
 He speaks plain cannon, fire and smoke and bounce ; ⁵²

⁵⁰ If the text be right, the meaning is, " Lions are *not* more confident, *nor* mountains and rocks more free from motion."

⁵¹ *Flaw*, in one of its senses, signifies a violent gust of wind. So in Smith's *Sea Grammar*, 1627: " A *flaw* of wind is a gust, which is very violent upon a sudden, but quickly endeth." Shakespeare has it repeatedly so; as in *Coriolanus*, v. 3: " Like a great sea-mark, standing every *flaw*, and saving those that eye thee."

⁵² *Bounce* is the old word for the report of a gun, the same as our *bang*. So in *2 Henry the Fourth*, iii. 2: " There was a little quiver fellow, and 'a would manage you his piece thus: *rah, tuh, tuh*, would 'a say; *bounce* would

He gives the bastinado with his tongue :
 Our ears are cudgell'd ; not a word of his
 But buffets better than a fist of France :
 Zounds, I was never so bethump'd with words
 Since I first call'd my brother's father dad.

Eli. [*Aside to JOHN.*] Son, list to this conjunction, make
 this match ;

Give with our niece a dowry large enough :
 For by this knot thou shalt so surely tie
 Thy now-unsured assurance to the crown,
 That yon green boy shall have no sun to ripe
 The bloom that promiseth a mighty fruit.
 I see a yielding in the looks of France ;
 Mark, how they whisper : urge them while their souls
 Are capable⁵³ of this ambition,
 Lest zeal, now melted by the windy breath
 Of soft petitions, pity, and remorse,
 Cool and congeal again to what it was.

I Cit. Why answer not the double Majesties
 This friendly treaty of our threaten'd town ?

K. Phi. Speak England first, that hath been forward first
 To speak unto this city : — what say you ?

K. John. If that the Dauphin there, thy princely son,
 Can in this book of beauty read *I love*,
 Her dowry shall weigh equal with a queen :
 For Anjou, and fair Touraine, Maine, Poictiers,
 And all that we upon this side the sea —
 Except this city now by us besieged —

'a say ; and away again would 'a go," &c. — 'To *give the bastinado* is to beat with a cudgel ; the same as to *baste*, or to *give a basting*.

⁵³ *Capable* here is equivalent to *susceptible*. So in the next scene : " For I am sick, and *capable* of fears." See, also, *Richard III.*, page 95, note 3.

Find liable to our crown and dignity,
Shall gild her bridal bed ; and make her rich
In titles, honours, and promotions,
As she in beauty, education, blood,
Holds hand with any princess of the world.

K. Phi. What say'st thou, boy? look in the lady's face.

Lou. I do, my lord ; and in her eye I find
A wonder, or a wonderful miracle,
The shadow of myself form'd in her eye ;
Which, being but the shadow of your son,
Becomes a sun, and makes your son a shadow :
I do protest I never loved myself,
Till now infix'd I beheld myself
Drawn in the flattering table ⁵⁴ of her eye.

[*Whispers with* BLANCH.

Bast. [*Aside.*] Drawn in the flattering table of her eye !
Hang'd in the frowning wrinkle of her brow !
And quarter'd in her heart ! he doth espy
Himself love's traitor : this is pity now,
That, hang'd and drawn and quarter'd, there should be
In such a love so vile a lout as he.

Blanch. My uncle's will in this respect is mine :
If he see aught in you that makes him like,
That any thing he sees, which moves his liking,
I can with ease translate it to my will ;
Or if you will, to speak more properly,
I will enforce it easily to my love. —
Further I will not flatter you, my lord,
That all I see in you is worthy love,
Than this, that nothing do I see in you,

⁵⁴ *Table* for the board or canvas on which a picture is made.

Though churlish thoughts themselves should be your
judge,

That I can find should merit any hate.

K. John. What say these young ones? — What say you,
my niece?

Blanch. That she is bound in honour still to do
What you in wisdom still vouchsafe to say.

K. John. Speak, then, Prince Dauphin ; can you love this
lady?

Lou. Nay, ask me if I can refrain from love ;
For I do love her most unfeignedly.

K. John. Then do I give Volquessen, Touraine, Maine,
Poitiers, and Anjou, these five provinces,
With her to thee ; and this addition more,
Full thirty thousand marks of English coin. —
Philip of France, if thou be pleased withal,
Command thy son and daughter to join hands.

K. Phi. It likes⁵⁵ us well. — Young Princes, close your
hands.

Aust. And your lips too ; for I am well assured
That I did so when I was first affianced.⁵⁶

K. Phi. Now, citizens of Angiers, ope your gates,
Let in that amity which you have made ;
For at Saint Mary's chapel presently
The rites of marriage shall be solemnized. —
Is not the Lady Constance in this troop ?
I know she is not ; for this match made up
Her presence would have interrupted much :
Where is she and her son ? tell me, who knows.

⁵⁵ *Likes* was continually used thus, in all sorts of writing, for *suits* or *pleases*.

⁵⁶ *Affianced* is *betrothed* or *affianced*.

Lou. She's sad and passionate⁵⁷ at your Highness' tent.

K. Phi. And, by my faith, this league that we have made
Will give her sadness very little cure. —
Brother of England, how may we content
This widow'd lady? In her right we came ;
Which we, God knows, have turn'd another way,
To our own vantage.

K. John. We will heal up all ;
For we'll create young Arthur Duke of Bretagne
And Earl of Richmond ; and this rich fair town
We make him lord of. — Call the Lady Constance ;
Some speedy messenger bid her repair
To our solemnity : — I trust we shall,
If not fill up the measure of her will,
Yet in some measure satisfy her so
That we shall stop her exclamation.
Go we, as well as haste will suffer us,
To this unlook'd-for, unprepared pomp.

[*Exeunt all but the Bastard.* *The Citizens
retire from the walls.*

Bast. Mad world ! mad kings ! mad composition !
John, to stop Authur's title in the whole,
Hath willingly departed⁵⁸ with a part ;
And France, — whose armour conscience buckled on,
Whom zeal and charity brought to the field
As God's own soldier, — rounded⁵⁹ in the ear

⁵⁷ *Passionate* here means *perturbed* or *agitated*. So in *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*, 1600: "Tell me, good madam, why is your Grace so *passionate* of late?"

⁵⁸ *Departed* in the sense of *parted*, the two being formerly synonymous.

⁵⁹ To *round*, or *rown*, was sometimes used for to *whisper*. So in *The Examination of William Thorpe*, 1407: "And the archbishop called then

With that same purpose-changer, that sly devil ;
 That broker,⁶⁰ that still breaks the pate of faith ;
 That daily break-vow ; he that wins of all,
 Of kings, of beggars, old men, young men, maids,—
 Who having no external thing to lose
 But the word *maid*, cheats the poor maid of that ;
 That smooth-faced gentleman, tickling commodity,⁶¹—
 Commodity, the bias of the world ;
 The world, who of itself is peisèd⁶² well,
 Made to run even upon even ground,
 Till this advantage, this vile-drawing bias,
 This sway of motion, this commodity,
 Makes it take head from all indifferency,⁶³
 From all direction, purpose, course, intent :
 And this same bias, this commodity,
 'This bawd, this broker, this all-changing word,
 Clapp'd on the outward eye⁶⁴ of fickle France,
 Hath drawn him from his own determined aim,
 From a resolved and honourable war,
 To a most base and vile-concluded peace.—

to him a clerke, and *rownd* with him : and that clerke went forth, and soone brought in the constable of Saltwood castle, and the archbishop *rownd* a good while with him." See, also, *The Winter's Tale*, page 50, note 31.

⁶⁰ A *broker* was properly a *pander* or *pimp* ; hence, sometimes, as here, a *dissembler* or *cheat*.

⁶¹ *Commodity* here is *advantage*, *profit*, or *interest*. So, in 2 *Henry IV.*, i. 2, Falstaff says, "A good wit will make use of any thing : I will turn diseases to *commodity*."

⁶² *Peisèd* is *balanced* or *poised*. To *peise* is, properly, to *weigh*.

⁶³ *Indifferency* in the sense of *impartiality*. The world, swayed by interest, is compared to a biassed bowl, which is deflected from an impartial course by the load in one side.

⁶⁴ The allusion to the game of bowls is still kept up. Staunton says, "The aperture on one side which contains the *bias* or weight that inclines the bowl, in running, from the direct course, was sometimes called the eye."

And why rail I on this commodity?
But for because he hath not woo'd me yet :
Not that I have the power to clutch my hand,
When his fair angels⁶⁵ would salute my palm ;
But for my hand, as unattempted yet,
Like a poor beggar, raileth on the rich.
Well, whiles I am a beggar, I will rail,
And say, There is no sin but to be rich :
And being rich, my virtue then shall be
To say, There is no vice but beggary :
Since kings break faith upon commodity,
Gain, be my lord, — for I will worship thee !

[*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I. — *France. The French King's Tent.*

Enter CONSTANCE, ARTHUR, and SALISBURY.

Const. Gone to be married ! gone to swear a peace !
False blood to false blood join'd ! gone to be friends !
Shall Louis have Blanch ? and Blanch those provinces ?
It is not so ; thou hast misspoke, misheard ;
Be well advised, tell o'er thy tale again :
It cannot be ; thou dost but say 'tis so :
I trust I may not trust thee ; for thy word
Is but the vain breath of a common man :

⁶⁵ *Angel* was the name of a gold coin. See *Merchant*, page 124, note 7. — The sense of the passage is, "I rail at bribery, not because I have the virtue to keep my hand closed when a bribe tempts me to open it, but because I am as yet untempted."

Believe me, I do not believe thee, man ;
I have a king's oath to the contrary.
Thou shalt be punish'd for thus frightening me,
For I am sick, and capable of fears ;
Oppress'd with wrongs, and therefore full of fears ;
A widow, husbandless, subject to fears ;
A woman, naturally born to fears ;
And, though thou now confess thou didst but jest,
With my vex'd spirits I cannot take a truce,¹
But they will quake and tremble all this day.
What dost thou mean by shaking of thy head ?
Why dost thou look so sadly on my son ?
What means that hand upon that breast of thine ?
Why holds thine eye that lamentable rheum,²
Like a proud river peering o'er his bounds ?
Be these sad signs confirmers of thy words ?
Then speak again ; not all thy former tale,
But this one word, whether thy tale be true.

Sal. As true as I believe you think them false
That give you cause to prove my saying true.

Const. O, if thou teach me to believe this sorrow,
Teach thou this sorrow how to make me die ;
And let belief and life encounter so
As doth the fury of two desperate men,
Which in the very meeting fall and die ! —
Louis marry Blanch ! O boy, then where art thou ?

¹ To *take truce* is old language for to *make peace*. So in *Romeo and Juliet*, iii. 1 : " Could not *take truce* with the unruly spleen of Tybalt deaf to peace."

² *Lamentable* for *lamenting*; the passive form with the active sense, according to the old usage which I have often noted. See *Much Ado*, page 63, note 11. — *Rheum* was used indifferently for tears, and for the secretions of the nose and mouth.

France friend with England ! what becomes of me ? —
Fellow, be gone : I cannot brook thy sight ;
This news hath made thee a most ugly man.

Sal. What other harm have I, good lady, done,
But spoke the harm that is by others done ?

Const. Which harm within itself so heinous is,
As it makes harmful all that speak of it.

Arth. I do beseech you, madam, be content.

Const. If thou, that bidd'st me be content, wert grim,
Ugly, and slanderous to thy mother's womb,
Full of unpleasing blots and sightless³ stains,
Lame, foolish, crookèd, swart, prodigious,
Patch'd with foul moles and eye-offending marks,
I would not care, I then would be content ;
For then I should not love thee ; no, nor thou
Become thy great birth, nor deserve a crown.
But thou art fair ; and at thy birth, dear boy,
Nature and Fortune join'd to make thee great :
Of Nature's gifts thou mayst with lilies boast
And with the half-blown rose : but Fortune, O !
She is corrupted, changed, and won from thee ;
She adulterates hourly with thine uncle John ;
And with her golden hand hath pluck'd on France
To tread down fair respect of sovereignty,
And made his majesty the bawd to theirs.
France is a bawd to Fortune and King John,
That harlot Fortune, that usurping John ! —
Tell me, thou fellow, is not France forsworn ?

³ *Sightless* for *unsightly*. The Poet has a like use of several other words ; as in *King Richard II.*, iv. 1: "The bloody office of his *timeless* end." — *Swart*, in the next line, is *dark* or *swarthy*, and *prodigious* in the sense of *misshapen* or *monstrous*.

Envenom him with words ; or get thee gone,
And leave those woes alone which I alone
Am bound to under-bear.

Sal. Pardon me, madam,
I may not go without you to the Kings.

Const. Thou mayst, thou shalt ; I will not go with thee :
I will instruct my sorrows to be proud ;
For grief is proud, and makes his owner stout.⁴
To me, and to the state of my great grief,
Let kings assemble ; for my grief's so great,
That no supporter but the huge firm Earth
Can hold it up : here I and sorrow sit ;
Here is my throne, bid kings come bow to it.

[Seats herself on the ground.

*Enter King JOHN, King PHILIP, LOUIS, BLANCH, ELINOR, the
Bastard, AUSTRIA, and Attendants.*

K. Phi. 'Tis true, fair daughter ; and this blessèd day
Ever in France shall be kept festival :
To solemnize this day the glorious Sun
Stays in his course, and plays the alchemist,
Turning with splendour of his precious eye
The meagre cloddy earth to glittering gold :
The yearly course that brings this day about
Shall never see it but a holiday.

Const. *[Rising.]* A wicked day, and not a holy day !
What hath this day deserved ? what hath it done,

⁴ *Stout* in a moral sense ; that is, *proud*. — "Distress," says Johnson, "while there remains any prospect of relief, is weak and flexible ; but, when no succour remains, is fearless and stubborn : angry alike at those that injure, and at those that do not help ; careless to please where nothing can be gained, and fearless to offend when there is nothing further to be dreaded."

That it in golden letters should be set
Among the high tides in the calendar?⁵
Nay, rather turn this day out of the week,
This day of shame, oppression, perjury :
Or, if it must stand still, let teeming wives
Pray that their burdens may not fall this day,
Lest that their hopes prodigiously be cross'd :⁶
But⁷ on this day let seamen fear no wreck ;
No bargains break that are not this day made :
This day, all things begun come to ill end ;
Yea, faith itself to hollow falsehood change !

K. Phi. By Heaven, lady, you shall have no cause
To curse the fair proceedings of this day :
Have I not pawn'd to you my majesty ?

Const. You have beguiled me with a counterfeit
Resembling majesty ; which, being touch'd and tried,
Proves valueless : you are forsworn, forsworn ;
You came in arms to spill mine enemies' blood,
But now in arms you strengthen it with yours :
The grappling vigour and rough frown of war
Is cold in amity and painted peace,
And our oppression hath made up this league. —
Arm, arm, you Heavens, against these perjured Kings !
A widow cries ; be husband to me, Heavens !
Let not the hours of this ungodly day
Wear out the day in peace ; but, ere sunset,
Set armèd discord 'twixt these perjured Kings !
Hear me, O, hear me !

⁵ "High tides of the calendar" are times set down in the almanac to be specially observed ; days marked for public honour and celebration.

⁶ Lest their hopes be frustrated by monstrous births.

⁷ But in the exceptive sense ; from *be out*.

Aust. Lady Constance, peace !

Const. War ! war ! no peace ! peace is to me a war.
O Limoges ! O Austria ! thou dost shame
That bloody spoil : thou slave, thou wretch, thou coward !
Thou little valiant, great in villainy !
Thou ever strong upon the stronger side !
Thou Fortune's champion that dost never fight
But when her humorous ladyship is by
To teach thee safety ! thou art perjured too,
And soothest up greatness. What a fool wert thou,
A ramping fool, to brag, and stamp, and swear,
Upon my party !⁸ Thou cold-blooded slave,
Hast thou not spoke like thunder on my side ?
Been sworn my soldier ? bidding me depend
Upon thy stars, thy fortune, and thy strength ?
And dost thou now fall over to my foes ?
Thou wear a lion's hide ! doff it for shame,
And hang a calf's-skin on those recreant limbs.

Aust. O, that a man should⁹ speak those words to me !

Bast. And hang a calf's-skin on those recreant limbs.

Aust. Thou dardest not say so, villain, for thy life.

Bast. And hang a calf's-skin on those recreant limbs.

K. John. We like not this ; thou dost forget thyself.

K. Phi. Here comes the holy legate of the Pope.

Enter PANDULPH, attended.

Pand. Hail, you anointed deputies of Heaven !

⁸ *Party* for *part* ; that is, *side*. The two words were often used interchangeably.

⁹ *Should* for *would* ; the two being often used indiscriminately. Constance means that Austria is a coward, and that a calf's-skin would fit him better than a lion's.

To thee, King John, my holy errand is.
I Pandulph, of fair Milan Cardinal,
And from Pope Innocent the legate here,
Do in his name religiously demand,
Why thou against the Church, our holy mother,
So wilfully dost spurn, and, force perforce,¹⁰
Keep Stephen Langton, chosen Archbishop
Of Canterbury, from that holy see?
This, in our foresaid holy father's name,
Pope Innocent, I do demand of thee.

K. John. What earthly name to interrogatories
Can task the free breath of a sacred king?¹¹
Thou canst not, Cardinal, devise a name
So slight, unworthy, and ridiculous,
To charge me to an answer, as the Pope.
Tell him this tale; and from the mouth of England
Add thus much more, That no Italian priest
Shall tithe or toll in our dominions;
But as we, under Heaven, are supreme head,
So, under Him, that great supremacy,
Where we do reign, we will alone uphold,
Without th' assistance of a mortal hand:
So tell the Pope; all reverence set apart
To him and his usurp'd authority.¹²

K. Phi. Brother of England, you blaspheme in this.

¹⁰ *Force* and *perforce* were often thus used together, merely to intensify the expression. Cotgrave explains it, "of necessitie, will he nill he, in spite of his teeth."

¹¹ The order is, "What earthly name can task to interrogatories the free breath," &c.; meaning, simply, "what earthly power can hold a free king responsible, or call him to account?"

¹² "All reverence to him and his usurp'd authority *being* set apart"; that is, cast off.

K. John. Though you, and all the kings of Christendom,
Are led so grossly by this meddling priest,
Dreading the curse that money may buy out ;
And by the merit of vile gold, dross, dust,
Purchase corrupted pardon of a man,
Who in that sale sells pardon from himself ;
Though you and all the rest, so grossly led,
This juggling witchcraft with revenue cherish ;
Yet I, alone, alone do me oppose
Against the Pope, and count his friends my foes.

Pand. Then, by the lawful power that I have,
Thou shalt stand cursed and excommunicate :
And blessèd shall he be that doth revolt
From his allegiance to an heretic ;
And meritorious shall that hand be call'd,
Canónizèd, and worshipp'd as a saint,
That takes away by any secret course
Thy hateful life.

Const. O, lawful let it be
That I have room with Rome to curse awhile !
Good father Cardinal, cry thou amen
To my keen curses ; for without my wrong
There is no tongue hath power to curse him right.

Pand. There's law and warrant, lady, for my curse.

Const. And for mine too : when law can do no right,
Let it be lawful that law bar no wrong :
Law cannot give my child his kingdom here ;
For he that holds his kingdom holds the law :
Therefore, since law itself is perfect wrong,
How can the law forbid my tongue to curse ?

Pand. Philip of France, on peril of a curse,
Let go the hand of that arch-heretic ;

And raise the power of France upon his head,
Unless he do submit himself to Rome.

Eli. Look'st thou pale, France? do not let go thy hand.

Const. Look to that, devil; lest that France repent,
And by disjoining hands, Hell lose a soul.

Aust. King Philip, listen to the Cardinal.

Bast. And hang a calf's-skin on his recreant limbs.

Aust. Well, ruffian, I must pocket up these wrongs,
Because —

Bast. Your breeches best may carry them.

K. John. Philip, what say'st thou to the Cardinal?

Const. What should he say, but as the Cardinal?

Lou. Bethink you, father; for the difference
Is, purchase of a heavy curse from Rome,
Or the light loss of England for a friend:
Forgo the easier.

Blanch. That's the curse of Rome.

Const. O Louis, stand fast! the Devil tempts thee here
In likeness of a new-uptrimmèd bride.

Blanch. The Lady Constance speaks not from her faith,
But from her need.

Const. O, if thou grant my need,
Which only lives but by the death of faith,
That need must needs infer this principle,
That faith would live again by death of need!
O, then, tread down my need, and faith mounts up;
Keep my need up, and faith is trodden down!

K. John. The King is moved, and answers not to this.

Const. O, be removed from him, and answer well!

Aust. Do so, King Philip; hang no more in doubt.

Bast. Hang nothing but a calf's-skin, most sweet lout.

K. Phi. I am perplex'd, and know not what to say.

Pand. What canst thou say but will perplex thee more,
If thou stand excommunicate and cursed?

K. Phi. Good reverend father, make my person yours,
And tell me how you would bestow yourself.
This royal hand and mine are newly knit,
And the conjunction of our inward souls
Married in league, coupled and link'd together
With all religious strength of sacred vows ;
The latest breath that gave the sound of words
Was deep-sworn faith, peace, amity, true love
Between our kingdoms and our royal selves ;
And even before this truce, but new before, —
No longer than we well could wash our hands,
To clap this royal bargain up of peace, —
Heaven knows, they were besmear'd and overstain'd
With slaughter's pencil, where revenge did paint
The fearful difference of incensèd kings :
And shall these hands, so lately purged of blood,
So newly join'd in love, so strong in both,¹³
Unyoke this seizure and this kind regret?¹⁴
Play fast and loose with faith? so jest with Heaven,
Make such unconstant children of ourselves,
As now again to snatch our palm from palm ;
Unswear faith sworn ; and on the marriage-bed
Of smiling peace to march a bloody host,
And make a riot on the gentle brow
Of true sincerity? O, holy sir,
My reverend father, let it not be so !
Out of your grace, devise, ordain, impose

¹³ So strong both in *deeds of blood* and in *deeds of love*.

¹⁴ *Regret* here means interchange of salutation.

Some gentle order ; then we shall be blest
To do your pleasure, and continue friends.

Pand. All form is formless, order orderless,
Save what is opposite to England's love.
Therefore, to arms ! be champion of our Church !
Or let the Church, our mother, breathe her curse, —
A mother's curse, — on her revolting son.
France, thou mayst hold a serpent by the tongue,
A chafed lion by the mortal¹⁵ paw,
A fasting tiger safer by the tooth,
Than keep in peace that hand which thou dost hold.

K. Phi. I may disjoin my hand, but not my faith.

Pand. So makest thou faith an enemy to faith ;
And, like a civil war, sett'st oath to oath,
Thy tongue against thy tongue. O, let thy vow
First made to Heaven, first be to Heaven perform'd ;
That is, to be the champion of our Church !
What since thou swore'st is sworn against thyself,
And may not be performèd by thyself :
For that which thou hast sworn to do amiss
Is most amiss when it is truly done ;
And being not done, where doing tends to ill,
The truth is then most done, not doing it :¹⁶
The better act of purposes mistook
Is to mistake again ; though indirect,
Yet indirection thereby grows direct,

¹⁵ *Mortal* is *deadly*, that which *kills*. Commonly so in Shakespeare. The venom of serpents, or snakes, was formerly supposed to be seated in the tongue ; and snakes in general were held to be poisonous.

¹⁶ A specimen of argument *in converso*. "On the one hand, the wrong which you have sworn to do, is most wrong when your oath is truly performed ; on the other hand, when a proposed act tends to ill, the truth is most done by leaving the act undone."

And falsehood falsehood cures ; as fire cools fire
Within the scorched veins of one new-burn'd.¹⁷
It is religion that doth make vows kept :
But thou hast sworn against religion ;
By which thou swear'st against the thing thou swear'st,
And makest an oath — the surety for thy truth —
Against an oath, — the test thou art unsure.¹⁸
Who swears, swears only not to be forsworn ;
Else what a mockery should it be to swear !
But thou dost swear only to be forsworn ;
And most forsworn, to keep what thou dost swear.¹⁹
Therefore thy later vow against thy first
Is in thyself rebellion to thyself ;
And better conquest never canst thou make
Than arm thy constant and thy nobler parts
Against these giddy-loose suggestions :²⁰
Upon which better part our prayers come in,
If thou vouchsafe them ; but if not, then know
The peril of our curses light²¹ on thee,
So heavy as thou shalt not shake them off,
But in despair die under their black weight.

¹⁷ The Poet has several references to the mode of curing a burn by holding the burnt place up to the fire. So in *Romeo and Juliet*, i. 2: "Tut, man, one fire burns out another's burning." And in *Julius Cæsar*, iii. 1: "As fire drives out fire, so pity, pity."

¹⁸ "By which *act*, thou swearest against the thing thou swearest *by*; and, by setting an oath against an oath, thou makest that which is the surety for thy truth the proof that thou art untrue." See Critical Notes.

¹⁹ That is, "*in keeping* that which thou dost swear." An instance of the infinitive used gerundively. See *Julius Cæsar*, page 137, note 2.

²⁰ *Suggestions*, as usual in Shakespeare, for *temptations* or *seductions*. See *The Tempest*, page 89, note 53.

²¹ An instance of false concord; the verb agreeing with the nearest substantive, *curses*, instead of with the proper subject, *peril*.

Aust. Rebellion, flat rebellion !

Bast. Will't not be ?

Will not a calf's-skin stop that mouth of thine ?

Lou. Father, to arms !

Blanch. Upon thy wedding-day ?

Against the blood that thou hast married ?

What, shall our feast be kept with slaughter'd men ?

Shall braying trumpets and loud churlish drums —

Clamours of Hell — be measures to our pomp ?

O husband, hear me ! — ah, alack, how new

Is husband in my mouth ! — even for that name,

Which till this time my tongue did ne'er pronounce,

Upon my knee, I beg, go not to arms

Against mine uncle.

Const. O, upon my knee,

Made hard with kneeling, I do pray to thee,

Thou virtuous Dauphin, alter not the doom

Forethought by Heaven !

Blanch. Now shall I see thy love : what motive may
Be stronger with thee than the name of wife ?

Const. That which upholdeth him that thee upholds,
His honour : — O, thine honour, Louis, thine honour !

Lou. I muse ²² your Majesty doth seem so cold,
When such profound respects do pull you on.

Pand. I will denounce a curse upon his head.

K. Phi. Thou shalt not need. — England, I'll fall from
thee.

Const. O fair return of banish'd majesty !

Eli. O foul revolt of French inconstancy !

²² *Muse* for *wonder*. Often so. — *Respects*, in the next line, is *considerations* ; a frequent usage. See *Much Ado*, page 63, note 10.

K. John. France, thou shalt rue this hour within this hour.

Bast. Old Time the clock-setter, that bald sexton Time, Is it as he will? well, then, France shall rue.

Blanch. The Sun's o'ercast with blood : fair day, adieu ! Which is the side that I must go withal ? I am with both : each army hath a hand ; And in their rage, I having hold of both, They whirl asunder and dismember me. — Husband, I cannot pray that thou mayst win ; — Uncle, I needs must pray that thou mayst lose ; — Father, I may not wish the fortune thine ; — Grandam, I will not wish thy wishes thrive : — Whoever wins, on that side shall I lose ; Assured loss before the match be play'd.

Lou. Lady, with me ; with me thy fortune lies.

Blanch. There where my fortune lives, there my life dies.

K. John. Cousin, go draw our puissance together. —

[*Exit Bastard.*]

France, I am burn'd up with inflaming wrath ; A rage whose heat hath this condition, That nothing can allay't, nothing but blood, The best and dearest-valued blood of France.

K. Phi. Thy rage shall burn thee up, and thou shalt turn To ashes, ere our blood shall quench that fire : Look to thyself, thou art in jeopardy.

K. John. No more than he that threatens. — To arms let's
hie ! [Excunt, severally, the English and French

Kings, &c.

SCENE II. — *The Same. Plains near Angiers.*

Alarums, excursions. Enter the Bastard, with AUSTRIA'S head.

Bast. Now, by my life, this day grows wondrous hot ;
Some fiery devil hovers in the sky,
And pours down mischief. — Austria's head lie there,
While Philip breathes.

Enter King JOHN, ARTHUR, and HUBERT.

K. John. Hubert, keep thou this boy. — Philip, make up :¹
My mother is assailed in our tent,
And ta'en, I fear.

Bast. My lord, I rescued her ;
Her Highness is in safety, fear you not :
But on, my liege ; for very little pains
Will bring this labour to an happy end. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. — *The Same. Another Part of the Plains.*

Alarums, excursions, retreat. Enter King JOHN, ELINOR, ARTHUR, the Bastard, HUBERT, and Lords.

K. John. [*To ELINOR.*] So shall it be ; your Grace shall
stay behind,
More strongly guarded. — [*To ARTHUR.*] Cousin, look not
sad :
Thy grandam loves thee ; and thy uncle will
As dear be to thee as thy father was.

¹ *Make up* is an old military term for *advance*. — Here John calls the Bastard Philip, notwithstanding he has knighted him as Sir Richard, and has before called him by the latter name.

Arth. O, this will make my mother die with grief!

K. John. [*To the Bast.*] Cousin, away for England; haste before:

And, ere our coming, see thou shake the bags
Of hoarding abbots; set at liberty
Imprison'd angels:² the fat ribs of peace
Must by the hungry war be fed upon:
Use our commission in his utmost force.

Bast. Bell, book, and candle³ shall not drive me back,
When gold and silver becks me to come on.
I leave your Highness. — Grandam, I will pray —
If ever I remember to be holy —
For your fair safety; so, I kiss your hand.

Eli. Farewell, gentle cousin.

K. John. Coz, farewell.

[*Exit Bastard.*]

Eli. Come hither, little kinsman; hark, a word.

[*Takes ARTHUR aside.*]

K. John. Come hither, Hubert. O my gentle Hubert,
We owe thee much! within this wall of flesh
There is a soul counts thee her creditor,
And with advantage means to pay thy love:
And, my good friend, thy voluntary oath
Lives in this bosom, dearly cherish'd.

² The gold coin so named. See page 74, note 65.

³ Alluding to the old forms used in pronouncing the final curse of excommunication. On such occasions, the bishop and clergy went into the church, with a cross borne before them, and with several waxen tapers lighted. At the climax of the cursing, the tapers were extinguished, with a prayer that the soul of the excommunicate might be "given over utterly to the power of the fiend, as this candle is now quenched and put out." What with these things, and what with the tolling of bells and the using of books, it was an appalling ceremony.

Give me thy hand. I had a thing to say, —
But I will fit it with some better time.
By Heaven, Hubert, I'm almost ashamed
To say what good respect I have of thee.

Hub. I am much bounden to your Majesty.

K. John. Good friend, thou hast no cause to say so yet :
But thou shalt have ; and, creep time ne'er so slow,
Yet it shall come for me to do thee good.
I had a thing to say, — but let it go :
The Sun is in the heaven, and the proud day,
Attended with the pleasures of the world,
Is all too wanton and too full of gauds
To give me audience : if the midnight bell
Did, with his iron tongue and brazen mouth,
Sound one ⁴ into the drowsy ear of night ;
If this same were a churchyard where we stand,
And thou possessèd with a thousand wrongs ;
Or if that surly spirit, melancholy,
Had baked thy blood, and made it heavy-thick,
Which else runs tickling up and down the veins,
Making that idiot, laughter, keep men's eyes,
And strain their cheeks to idle merriment,
A passion hateful to my purposes ;
Or if that thou couldst see me without eyes,
Hear me without thine ears, and make reply
Without a tongue, using conceit alone,
Without eyes, ears, and harmful sound of words ;

⁴ There is an apparent discrepancy here between *midnight* and *sound one*. But such notes of inexactness were not uncommon in all sorts of writing. So in *The Famous History of Doctor Faustus*, quoted by Dyce : "It happened that, betweene twelve and *one* a clocke at *midnight*, there blew a mighty storme of winde against the house."

Then, in despite of brooded⁵ watchful day,
 I would into thy bosom pour my thoughts :
 But, ah, I will not ! yet I love thee well ;
 And, by my troth, I think thou lovest me well.

Hub. So well, that what you bid me undertake,
 Though that my death were adjunct to my act,
 By Heaven, I'd do't.

K. John. Do not I know thou wouldst ?
 Good Hubert, Hubert, Hubert, throw thine eye
 On yon young boy : I'll tell thee what, my friend,
 He is a very serpent in my way ;
 And, wheresoe'er this foot of mine doth tread,
 He lies before me : dost thou understand me ?
 Thou art his keeper.

Hub. And I'll keep him so,
 That he shall not offend your Majesty.

K. John. Death.

Hub. My lord ?

K. John. A grave.

Hub. He shall not live.

K. John. Enough.

I could be merry now. Hubert, I love thee ;
 Well, I'll not say what I intend for thee :
 Remember. — Madam, fare you well :
 I'll send those powers o'er to your Majesty.

Eli. My blessing go with thee !

K. John. For England, cousin, go :
 Hubert shall be your man, t' attend on you
 With all true duty. — On toward Calais, ho ! *[Exeunt.]*

⁵ *Brooded* for *brooding*, under the old indiscriminate use of active and passive forms. See *Tempest*, page 135, note 10. — Milton has a like expression in his *L'Allegro* : " Find out some uncouth cell, where *brooding* darkness spreads his jealous wings."

SCENE IV.—*The Same. The French King's Tent.*

Enter King PHILIP, LOUIS, PANDULPH, and Attendants.

K. Phi. So, by a roaring tempest on the flood,
A whole armado of convented¹ sail
Is scatter'd and disjoin'd from fellowship.

Pand. Courage and comfort ! all shall yet go well.

K. Phi. What can go well, when we have run so ill?
Are we not beaten? Is not Angiers lost?
Arthur ta'en prisoner? divers dear friends slain?
And bloody England into England gone,
O'erbearing interruption, spite of France?

Lou. What he hath won, that hath he fortified :
So hot a speed with such advice² disposed,
Such temperate order in so fierce a course,
Doth want example : who hath read or heard
Of any kindred action like to this?

K. Phi. Well could I bear that England had this praise,
So we could find some pattern of our shame.
Look, who comes here ! a grave unto a soul ;
Holding th' eternal³ spirit, against her will,
In the vile prison of afflicted breath.—

Enter CONSTANCE.

I pr'ythee, lady, go away with me.

¹ *Convented* is *assembled* or *collected*.—*Armado* is a fleet of war. The word was adopted from the Spanish, and was made familiar to English ears by the defeat of the Armada.

² *Advice* here is *judgment* or *consideration*. Often so. See *The Merchant*, page 180, note 1.

³ *Eternal* for *immortal*. So in *Othello*, iii. 3: "By the worth of man's eternal soul."—"The vile prison of afflicted breath" is the body, of course.

Const. Lo, now ! now see the issue of your peace !

K. Phi. Patience, good lady ! comfort, gentle Constance !

Const. No, I defy⁴ all counsel, all redress,
But that which ends all counsel, true redress,
Death, death.—O amiable lovely death !
Thou odoriferous stench ! sound rottenness !
Arise forth from the couch of lasting night,
Thou hate and terror to prosperity,
And I will kiss thy détestable bones ;
And put my eyeballs in thy vaulty brows ;
And ring these fingers with thy household worms ;
And stop this gap of breath with fulsome dust ;
And be a carrion monster like thyself :
Come, grin on me ; and I will think thou smilest,
And buss thee as thy wife ! Misery's love,
O, come to me !

K. Phi. O fair affliction, peace !

Const. No, no, I will not, having breath to cry :—
O, that my tongue were in the thunder's mouth !
Then with a passion would I shake the world ;
And rouse from sleep that fell anatomy
Which cannot hear a lady's feeble voice,
Which scorns a mother's invocation.

Pand. Lady, you utter madness, and not sorrow.

Const. Thou art unholy to belie me so ;
I am not mad : this hair I tear is mine ;
My name is Constance ; I was Geoffrey's wife ;
Young Arthur is my son, and he is lost :
I am not mad : I would to Heaven I were !
For then 'tis like I should forget myself :

⁴ To *refuse* or *reject* is among the old senses of to *defy*.

O, if I could, what grief should I forget !
Preach some philosophy to make me mad,
And thou shalt be canonized, Cardinal ;
For, being not mad, but sensible of grief,
My reasonable part produces reason⁵
How I may be deliver'd of these woes,
And teaches me to kill or hang myself :
If I were mad, I should forget my son,
Or madly think a babe of clouts⁶ were he :
I am not mad ; too well, too well I feel
The different plague of each calamity.

K. Phi. Bind up those tresses. O, what love I note
In the fair multitude of those her hairs !
Where but by chance a silver drop hath fall'n,
Even to that drop ten thousand wiry friends
Do glue themselves in sociable grief ;
Like true, inseparable, faithful loves,
Sticking together in calamity.

Const. To England, if you will.⁷

K. Phi. Bind up your hairs.

Const. Yes, that I will ; and wherefore will I do it ?
I tore them from their bonds, and cried aloud,
*O, that these hands could so redeem my son,
As they have given these hairs their liberty !*
But now I envy at their liberty,
And will again commit them to their bonds,
Because my poor child is a prisoner.—

⁵ *Reason* in the sense of *reasoning* or *consideration*.

⁶ "A babe of clouts" is simply a *doll*, or a *rag-baby*.

⁷ It is not very apparent what Constance means by these words, or what object she is addressing. Perhaps, as Staunton suggests, she "apostrophizes her hair, as she madly tears it from its bonds."

And, father Cardinal, I have heard you say
That we shall see and know our friends in Heaven :
If that be true, I shall see my boy again ;
For since the birth of Cain, the first male child,
To him that did but yesterday suspire,
There was not such a gracious⁸ creature born.
But now will canker-sorrow eat my bud,
And chase the native beauty from his cheek ;
And he will look as hollow as a ghost,
As dim and meagre as an ague-fit :
And so he'll die ; and, rising so again,
When I shall meet him in the Court of Heaven
I shall not know him : therefore never, never
Must I behold my pretty Arthur more.

Pand. You hold too heinous a respect⁹ of grief.

Const. He talks to me that never had a son.

K. Phi. You are as fond of grief as of your child.

Const. Grief fills the room up of my absent child,
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me ;
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,
Remembers me of all his gracious parts,
Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form :
Then have I reason to be fond of grief.
Fare you well : had you such a loss as I,
I could give better comfort than you do.¹⁰

⁸ *Gracious* in the sense of *graceful* or *lovely*. So, again, in "all his gracious parts," a little after.—The sense of the next line is, that sorrow, like a canker-worm, will eat the bud, &c. So in *Romeo and Juliet*, i. 1 : "As is the bud bit with an envious worm." See *Tempest*, page 71, note 96.

⁹ *Respect* in the sense of *favour* or *regard*. "Such a perverse and wilful cherishing of grief is a heinous wrong."

¹⁰ This is a sentiment which great sorrow always dictates. Whoever

I will not keep this form upon my head,

[*Disheavelling her hair.*]

When there is such disorder in my wit. —

O Lord ! my boy, my Arthur, my fair son !

My life, my joy, my food, my all the world !

My widow-comfort, and my sorrows' cure ! [Exit.

K. Phi. I fear some outrage, and I'll follow her. [Exit.

Lou. There's nothing in this world can make me joy :

Life is as tedious as a twice-told tale¹¹

Vexing the dull ear of a drowsy man ;

And bitter shame hath spoil'd the sweet world's taste,

That it yields nought but shame and bitterness.

Pand. Before the curing of a strong disease,

Even in the instant of repair and health,

The fit is strongest ; evils that take leave,

On their departure most of all show evil :

What have you lost by losing of this day ?

Lou. All days of glory, joy, and happiness.

Pand. If you had won it, certainly you had.

No, no ; when Fortune means to men most good,

She looks upon them with a threatening eye.

'Tis strange to think how much King John hath lost

In this which he accounts so clearly won :

Are not you grieved that Arthur is his prisoner ?

Lou. As heartily as he is glad he hath him.

Pand. Your mind is all as youthful as your blood.

Now hear me speak with a prophetic spirit ;

For even the breath of what I mean to speak

cannot help himself casts his eyes on others for assistance, and often mistakes their inability for coldness. — JOHNSON.

¹¹ So in Psalm xc. : " For when Thou art angry all our days are gone ; we bring our years to an end, as it were a tale that is told."

Shall blow each dust, each straw, each little rub,¹²
 Out of the path which shall directly lead
 Thy foot to England's throne ; and therefore mark.
 John hath seized Arthur ; and it cannot be,
 That, whiles warm life plays in that infant's veins,
 The misplaced John should entertain one hour,
 One minute, nay, one quiet breath of rest :
 A sceptre snatch'd with an unruly hand
 Must be as boisterously maintain'd as gain'd ;
 And he that stands upon a slippery place
 Makes nice¹³ of no vile hold to stay him up :
 That John may stand, then Arthur needs must fall ;
 So be it, for it cannot be but so.

Lou. But what shall I gain by young Arthur's fall?

Pand. You, in the right of Lady Blanch your wife,
 May then make all the claim that Arthur did.

Lou. And lose it, life and all, as Arthur did.

Pand. How green you are, and fresh in this old world !
 John lays you plots ; the times conspire with you ;
 For he that steeps his safety in true blood,¹⁴
 Shall find but bloody safety and untrue.
 This act, so evilly borne,¹⁵ shall cool the hearts
 Of all his people, and freeze up their zeal,

¹² *Rub* was a term at bowls, for *hindrance*, *obstruction*, any thing that turned the bowl from its aim. See *Hamlet*, page 127, note 7.

¹³ To make *nice* is to be *scrupulous*, to *stick at*. So the Poet uses *nice* repeatedly. And we still say, he *makes no scruple* of doing so and so.

¹⁴ *True blood* here means the blood of the true, that is, just or rightful, claimant of the crown. The Poet has several instances of *blood* put for *person*. So in *Julius Cæsar*, iv. 3: "I know young *bloods* look for a time of rest."

¹⁵ *Evilly borne* is *wickedly carried on* or *performed*. The Poet often uses to *bear* in this sense. In what follows, *shall* for *will*. Often so.

That none so small advantage shall step forth
 To check his reign, but they will cherish it :
 No natural exhalation¹⁶ in the sky,
 No scape of Nature,¹⁷ no distemper'd day,
 No common wind, no customèd event,
 But they will pluck away his¹⁸ natural cause,
 And call them meteors,¹⁹ prodigies, and signs,
 Abortives, présages, and tongues of Heaven,
 Plainly denouncing vengeance upon John.

Lou. May be he will not touch young Arthur's life,

¹⁶ The Poet sometimes uses *exhalation* in a way that seems strange to us. So in *Julius Cæsar*, ii. 1: "The exhalations, whizzing in the air, give so much light that I may read by them." As this is said amidst a fierce thunder-storm at night, *exhalations* must mean flashes of lightning. And such, or something such, may well be the meaning in the text.

¹⁷ "*Scape of Nature*" may well mean any irregularity in the course of things, or any event which, though natural, is uncommon enough to excite particular notice, such as a "distemper'd day," or an "exhalation in the sky." So the Poet has "'scapes of wit" for *sallies*, *flights*, or *frolics* of wit. And so Nature may be said to have her frolics, sometimes merry, and sometimes mad; her weather, for instance, sometimes plays very wild pranks. It is observable that in the text we have a sort of climax proceeding from things less common to things more and more common.

¹⁸ *His* for *its*, referring to *event*. The form *its*, though repeatedly used by Shakespeare, especially in his later plays, had not then the stamp of English currency. See page 56, note 25.—The Poet seems to have been specially fond of the word *pluck* for *pull*, *tear*, *wrench*, *jerk*, or *draw*.

¹⁹ *Meteor* was used in much the same way as *exhalation*, only it bore a more ominous or ill-boding sense; any strikingly black or any strikingly brilliant phenomenon in the heavens. So in *1 Henry the Fourth*, v. 1: "And be no more an *exhaled meteor*, a prodigy of fear, and a portent of broachèd mischief to the unborn times." Also in *Romeo and Juliet*, iii. 5: "Yon light is not day-light: it is some *meteor* that the Sun *exhales*." And in v. 2, of this play: "Makes me more amazed than had I seen the vaulty top of heaven figured quite o'er with burning meteors."—*Abortives* are monstrous births, whether of man or beast, which were thought to portend calamities and disasters.

But hold himself safe in his prisonment.

Pand. O, sir, when he shall hear of your approach,
If that young Arthur be not gone already,
Even at that news he dies ; and then the hearts
Of all his people shall revolt from him,
And kiss the lips of unacquainted²⁰ change ;
And pick strong matter of revolt and wrath
Out of the bloody fingers' ends of John.
Methinks I see this hurly²¹ all on foot :
And, O, what better matter breeds for you
Than I have named ! The bastard Falconbridge
Is now in England, ransacking the Church,
Offending charity : if but a dozen French
Were there in arms, they would be as a call²²
To train ten thousand English to their side ;
Or, as a little snow, tumbled about,
Anon becomes a mountain.²³ O noble Dauphin,
Go with me to the King : 'tis wonderful
What may be wrought out of their discontent,
Now that their souls are topful of offence :
For England go : I will whet on the King.

Lou. Strong reasons make strong actions : let us go :
If you say ay, the King will not say no. [*Exeunt.*]

²⁰ *Unacquainted* for *unaccustomed* or *extraordinary*.

²¹ *Hurly* is *tumult, commotion* ; like *hurly-burly*.

²² An allusion to the reed, or pipe, termed a *bird-call* ; or to the practice of bird-catchers, who, in laying their nets, place a caged bird over them, which they term the *call-bird* or *bird-call*, to lure the wild birds to the snare. — STAUNTON.

²³ Bacon, in his *History of Henry VII.*, speaking of Simnel's march, remarks that their *snowball* did not gather as it went.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. — *Northampton. A Room in the Castle.**Enter HUBERT and two Attendants.*

Hub. Heat me these irons hot ; and look you stand
Within the arras :¹ when I strike my foot
Upon the bosom of the ground, rush forth,
And bind the boy which you shall find with me
Fast to the chair : be heedful : hence, and watch.

I Attend. I hope your warrant will bear out the deed.

Hub. Uncleanly scruples ! fear not you : look to't. —

[*Exeunt Attendants.*]

Young lad, come forth ; I have to say with you.

Enter ARTHUR.

Arth. Good morrow, Hubert.

Hub. Good morrow, little Prince.

Arth. As little prince, having so great a title
To be more² prince, as may be. You are sad.

Hub. Indeed, I have been merrier.

Arth. Mercy on me !

Methinks no body should be sad but I ;
Yet, I remember, when I was in France,

¹ *Arras* were the hangings or tapestries with which rooms were lined, before the days of plastering. To keep them from being rotted by the damp, they were hung on frames, far enough from the walls to admit of a person's hiding behind them.

² *More for greater*, again. See page 51, note 5.

Young gentlemen would be as sad as night,
Only for wantonness.³ By my christendom,⁴
So I were out of prison, and kept sheep,
I should be merry as the day is long ;
And so I would be here, but that I doubt⁵
My uncle practises more harm to me :
He is afraid of me, and I of him :
Is it my fault that I was Geoffrey's son ?
No, indeed, is't not ; and I would to Heaven
I were your son, so you would love me, Hubert.

Hub. [*Aside.*] If I talk to him, with his innocent prate
He will awake my mercy, which lies dead :
Therefore I will be sudden and dispatch.

Arth. Are you sick, Hubert ? you look pale to-day :
In sooth,⁶ I would you were a little sick,
That I might sit all night and watch with you :
I warrant I love you more than you do me.

Hub. [*Aside.*] His words do take possession of my
bosom. —

Read here, young Arthur. — [*Showing a paper.*

[*Aside.*] How, now, foolish rheum !⁷
Turning dispiteous⁸ torture out of door !
I must be brief, lest resolution drop
Out at mine eyes in tender womanish tears. —

³ This fashionable affectation is ridiculed by Lyly in his *Midas* : " Now every base companion, being in his *muble-fables*, says he is *melancholy*."

⁴ *Christendom* for *christening* or *baptism*. The usage was common.

⁵ *Doubt* in the sense of *fear* or *suspect* ; a frequent usage. — *Practises*, in the next line, is *contrives*, *plots*, or *uses arts*. Repeatedly so.

⁶ In *truth* or *truly*. This use of *sooth* occurs very often.

⁷ *Rheum*, again, for *tears*. See page 75, note 2.

⁸ *Dispiteous* for *unpiteous*, that is, *pitiless*. — In the next line, *brief* is *quick*, *prompt*, or *sudden*. Often so.

Can you not read it? is't not fairly writ?

Arth. Too fairly, Hubert, for so foul effect:

Must you with hot irens burn out both mine eyes?

Hub. Young boy, I must.

Arth. And will you?

Hub. And I will.

Arth. Have you the heart? When your head did but ache,

I knit my handkercher about your brows, —

The best I had, a princess wrought it me, —

And I did never ask it you again;

And with my hand at midnight held your head;

And, like the watchful minutes to the hour,⁹

Still and anon cheer'd up the heavy time,

Saying, *What lack you?* and, *Where lies your grief?*

Or, *What good love may I perform for you?*

Many a poor man's son would have lain still,

And ne'er have spoke a loving word to you;

But you at your sick service¹⁰ had a prince.

Nay, you may think my love was crafty love,

And call it cunning; do, an if¹¹ you will:

If Heaven be pleased that you must use me ill,

Why, then you must. Will you put out mine eyes?

These eyes that never did nor never shall

So much as frown on you?

Hub. I've sworn to do it;

⁹ That is, as the minutes watch over, or mark, the progress or passage of the hour. A pretty way of expressing a minute and sedulous attention. — "*Still* and anon," in the next line, is the same as our "*ever* and anon."

¹⁰ *Sick service* is of course merely an instance of what is called transferred epithet: *service done to the sick*.

¹¹ *An if* is an old reduplication much used in the Poet's time. So we have *an*, or *if*, or *an if*, used indifferently.

And with hot irons must I burn them out.

Arth. Ah, none but in this iron age would do it !
The iron of itself, though heat ¹² red-hot,
Approaching near these eyes, would drink my tears,
And quench his fiery indignation
Even in the water of mine innocence ;
Nay, after that, consume away in rust,
But for containing fire to harm mine eyes.
Are you more stubborn-hard than hammer'd iron ?
An if an Angel should have come to me,
And told me Hubert should put out mine eyes,
I would not have believed him, — no tongue but Hubert's.

Hub. Come forth ! [*Stamps.*]

Re-enter Attendants, with cord, irons, &c.

Do as I bid you do.

Arth. O, save me, Hubert, save me ! my eyes are out
Even with the fierce looks of these bloody men.

Hub. Give me the iron, I say, and bind him here.

Arth. Alas, what need you be so boisterous-rough ?
I will not struggle, I will stand stone-still.
For Heaven-sake, Hubert, let me not be bound !
Nay, hear me, Hubert ! drive these men away,
And I will sit as quiet as a lamb ;
I will not stir, nor wince, nor speak a word,
Nor look upon the iron angerly :
Thrust but these men away, and I'll forgive you,
Whatever torment you do put me to.

Hub. Go, stand within ; let me alone with him.

1 Attend. I am best pleased to be from such a deed.

[*Exeunt Attendants.*]

¹² *Heat* for *heated*, as, before, *waft* for *waisted*. See page 52, note 13.

Arth. Alas, I then have chid away my friend !
He hath a stern look, but a gentle heart :
Let him come back, that his compassion may
Give life to yours.

Hub. Come, boy, prepare yourself.

Arth. Is there no remedy ?

Hub. None, but to lose your eyes.

Arth. O Heaven, that there were but a mote in yours,
A grain, a dust, a gnat, a wandering hair,
Any annoyance in that precious sense !
Then, feeling what small things are boisterous ¹³ there,
Your vile intent must needs seem horrible.

Hub. Is this your promise ? go to, hold your tongue.

Arth. Hubert, the utterance of a brace of tongues
Must needs want pleading for a pair of eyes :
Let me not hold my tongue, let me not, Hubert ;
Or, Hubert, if you will, cut out my tongue,
So I may keep mine eyes : O, spare mine eyes,
Though to no use but still to look on you !
Lo, by my troth, the instrument is cold,
And would not harm me.

Hub. I can heat it, boy.

Arth. No, in good sooth ; the fire is dead with grief,
Being create for comfort, to be used
In undeserved extremes : ¹⁴ see else yourself ;
There is no malice burning in this coal ;
The breath of heaven hath blown his spirit out,

¹³ *Boisterous* was used much more variously than at present ; as a common antithesis to *gentle*, and so for *rough, rude, violent*, &c.

¹⁴ *Extremities*, or *extreme severities*, that are unmerited. Johnson paraphrases the passage as follows : " The fire, being created not to hurt, but to comfort, is dead with grief for finding itself used in acts of cruelty, which, being innocent, I have not deserved."

And strew'd repentant ashes on his head.

Hub. But with my breath I can revive it, boy.

Arth. An if you do, you will but make it blush,
And glow with shame of your proceedings, Hubert :
Nay, it perchance will sparkle in your eyes ;
And, like a dog that is compell'd to fight,
Snatch at his master that doth tarre¹⁵ him on.
All things that you should use to do me wrong
Deny their office : only you do lack
That mercy which fierce fire and iron extend,
Creatures of note for mercy-lacking uses.

Hub. Well, see to live ; I will not touch thine eyes
For all the treasure that thine uncle owes :
Yet am I sworn, and I did purpose, boy,
With this same very iron to burn them out.

Arth. O, now you look like Hubert ! all this while
You were disguis'd.

Hub. Peace ; no more. Adieu.
Your uncle must not know but you are dead ;
I'll fill these doggèd spies with false reports :
And, pretty child, sleep doubtless¹⁶ and secure
That Hubert, for the wealth of all the world,
Will not offend thee.

Arth. O Heaven ! I thank you, Hubert.

Hub. Silence ; no more : go closely¹⁷ in with me :
Much danger do I undergo for thee. [*Exeunt.*]

¹⁵ To *tarre* is to incite, to instigate, as in setting on dogs. So in *Hamlet*, ii, 2 : " The nation holds it no sin to *tarre* them to the controversy." Also in *Troilus and Cressida*, i, 3 : " Pride must *tarre* the mastiffs on."

¹⁶ *Doubtless* for *fearless*, as *doubt* for *fear* a little before.

¹⁷ *Closely* is *secretly*; a frequent usage. So in *Hamlet*, iii, 1 : " For we have *closely* sent for Hamlet hither." So we have " keep *close*," and " stand *close*," for any furtive or hidden act.

SCENE II. — *The Same. A Room of State in the Palace.*

Enter King JOHN, crowned; PEMBROKE, SALISBURY, and other Lords. The King takes his state.

K. John. Here once again we sit, once again crown'd,
And look'd upon, I hope, with cheerful eyes.

Pem. This once again, but that your Highness pleased,
Was once superfluous:¹ you were crown'd before,
And that high royalty was ne'er pluck'd off;
The faiths of men ne'er stain'd with revolt;
Fresh expectation troubled not the land
With any long'd-for change or better state.

Sal. Therefore, to be possess'd with double pomp,
To guard² a title that was rich before,
To gild refin'd gold, to paint the lily,
To throw a perfume on the violet,
To smooth the ice, or add another hue
Unto the rainbow, or with taper-light
To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish,
Is wasteful and ridiculous excess.

Pem. But that your royal pleasure must be done,
This act is as an ancient tale new-told;
And in the last repeating troublesome,
Being urg'd at a time unseasonable.

Sal. In this, the antique and well-noted face
Of plain old form is much disfigur'd;
And, like a shifted wind unto a sail,
It makes the course of thoughts to fetch about;

¹ "Once *superfluous*" means once *more* than enough.

² To *guard* is to *face*, or *ornament with facings*. See *The Merchant*, page 111, note 30.

Startles and frights consideration ;
Makes sound opinion sick, and truth suspected,
For putting on so new a fashion'd robe.³

Pem. When workmen strive to do better than well,
They do confound their skill in covetousness ;⁴
And oftentimes excusing of a fault
Doth make the fault the worse by the excuse ;
As patches set upon a little breach
Discredit more in hiding of the fault
Than did the fault before it was so patch'd.

Sal. To this effect, before you were new-crown'd,
We breathed our counsel : but it pleased your Highness
To overbear't ; and we are all well pleased,
Since all and every part of what we would
Doth make a stand at what your Highness will.

K. John. Some reasons of this double coronation
I have possess'd you with, and think them strong ;
And more, more strong, when lesser is my fear,
I shall indue you with : meantime but ask
What you would have reform'd that is not well,
And well shall you perceive how willingly
I will both hear and grant you your requests.

Pem. Then I—as one that am the tongue of these,
To sound⁵ the purposes of all their hearts,
Both for myself and them, but, chief of all,
Your safety, for the which myself and they

³ Properly, "so new-fashion'd a robe." The Poet has many such inversions for metre's sake. See *The Tempest*, page 123, note 25.

⁴ *Covetousness* here means *over-eager desire of excelling*. Bacon, in like sort, distinguishes between the love of *excelling* and the love of *excellence* and ascribes the failures of certain men to the former.

⁵ To *sound*, as the word is here used, is to *speak* or *express*.

Bend their best studies—heartily request
Th' enfranchisement of Arthur ; whose restraint
Doth move the murmuring lips of discontent
To break into this dangerous argument :
If what in rest you have, in right you hold,⁶
Why should your fears—which, as they say, attend
The steps of wrong—then move you to mew up
Your tender kinsman, and to choke his days
With barbarous ignorance, and deny his youth
The rich advantage of good exercise ?
That the time's enemies may not have this
To grace occasions,⁷ let it be our suit,
That you have bid us ask, his liberty ;⁸
Which for our goods we do no further ask
Than whereupon our weal, on you depending,
Counts it your weal he have his liberty.

K. John. Let it be so : I do commit his youth
To your direction.—

Enter HUBERT ; whom King JOHN takes aside.

Hubert, what news with you ?

Pem. This is the man should do the bloody deed ;
He show'd his warrant to a friend of mine :
The image of a wicked heinous fault
Lives in his eye ; that close aspect⁹ of his

⁶ That is, "if you rightly hold that which you are possessed of."

⁷ "That they may not have this to urge in behalf of, or for giving plausibility to, *alleged* occasions ;" that is, occasions *of revolt*.

⁸ The order, according to the sense, is, "let his liberty be our suit, that you have bid us ask." The language would be better with *make* instead of *ask*. To *ask a suit* is hardly English.

⁹ *Close aspect* is look of secrecy, of concealment, or of keeping dark. See page 105, note 17.

Does show the mood of a much-troubled breast ;
And I do fearfully believe 'tis done,
What we so fear'd he had a charge to do.

Sal. The colour of the King doth come and go
Between his purpose and his conscience,¹⁰
Like heralds 'twixt two dreadful battles sent :¹¹
His passion is so ripe, it needs must break.

Pem. And when it breaks, I fear will issue thence
The foul corruption of a sweet child's death.

K. John. We cannot hold mortality's strong hand.
Good lords, although my will to give is living,
The suit which you demand is gone and dead :
He tells us Arthur is deceased to-night.¹²

Sal. Indeed, we fear'd his sickness was past cure.

Pem. Indeed, we heard how near his death he was
Before the child himself felt he was sick :
This must be answer'd either here or hence.

K. John. Why do you bend such solemn brows on me ?
Think you I bear the shears of destiny ?
Have I commandment on the pulse of life ?

Sal. It is apparent¹³ foul-play ; and 'tis shame

¹⁰ Between his wicked purpose and his conscience of right. Hubert gives the King to understand that his order for Arthur's death has been performed. — Perhaps I should note here, that in Shakespeare's time *conscience* was used as a dissyllable or trisyllable indifferently, as prosody might require. Here it is properly a trisyllable. The same was the case with *patience*, and other like words. And we have, in this play, many instances of words ending in *-tion* or *-sion*, where that ending is properly dissyllabic ; as in "Startles and frights *consideration*," in this scene.

¹¹ Not betwixt two *battles*, in our sense of the word, but betwixt two *armies* drawn up in *battle array*. *Battle* was often used thus.

¹² *To-night* for *last night*, or the *past night*. See *The Merchant*, page 117, note 2.

¹³ *Apparent*, here, is *evident* or *manifest*. See *King Richard III.*, page 100, note 15.

That greatness should so grossly offer it :
So thrive 'it in your game ! and so, farewell.

Pem. Stay yet, Lord Salisbury ; I'll go with thee,
And find th' inheritance of this poor child,
His little kingdom of a forcèd grave.
That blood which owed the breadth of all this isle,
Three foot¹⁴ of it doth hold : bad world the while !
This must not be thus borne : this will break out,
To all our sorrows, and ere long, I doubt.¹⁵ [*Exeunt* Lords.]

K. John. They burn in indignation. I repent :
There is no sure foundation set on blood,
No certain life achieved by others' death.—

Enter a Messenger.

A fearful eye¹⁶ thou hast : where is that blood
That I have seen inhabit in those cheeks ?
So foul a sky clears not without a storm :
Pour down thy weather. How goes all in France ?

Mess. From France to England.¹⁷ Never such a power
For any foreign preparation
Was levied in the body of a land.
The copy¹⁸ of your speed is learn'd by them ;
For when you should be told they do prepare,
The tidings come that they are all arrived.

¹⁴ In words denoting measurement of time, space, and quantity, the singular form is often used with the plural sense. So we have *year* for *years*, *mile* for *miles*, *pound* for *pounds*, and, as here, *foot* for *feet*. See *The Tempest*, page 51, note 13.

¹⁵ *Doubt*, again, for *fear* or *suspect*. See page 101, note 5.

¹⁶ "A fearful eye" here means an eye full of fear ; that is, *frightened*.

¹⁷ The messenger plays upon *goes* ; meaning, "all in France now goes to England."

¹⁸ *Copy* in the sense of *example* or *pattern*. Often so.

K. John. O, where hath our intelligence been drunk?
Where hath it slept? Where is my mother's ear,
That such an army could be drawn in France,
And she not hear of it?

Mess. My liege, her ear
Is stopp'd with dust; the first of April died
Your noble mother: and, as I hear, my lord,
The Lady Constance in a frenzy died
Three days before; but this from rumour's tongue
I idly heard; if true or false I know not.

K. John. Withhold thy speed, dreadful occasion!
O, make a league with me, till I have pleased
My discontented peers!—What! mother dead!
How wildly, then, walks my estate in France!—
Under whose conduct come those powers of France
That thou for truth givest out are landed here?

Mess. Under the Dauphin.

K. John. Thou hast made me giddy
With these ill tidings.—

Enter the Bastard and PETER of Pomfret.

Now, what says the world
To your proceedings? do not seek to stuff
My head with more ill news, for it is full.

Bast. But if you be afraid to hear the worst,
Then let the worst, unheard, fall on your head.

K. John. Bear with me, cousin; for I was amazed
Under the tide: but now I breathe again
Aloft the flood; and can give audience
To any tongue, speak it of what it will.

Bast. How I have sped among the clergymen,
The sums I have collected shall express.

But as I travell'd hither through the land,
I find the people strangely fantasied ;
Possess'd with rumours, full of idle dreams,
Not knowing what they fear, but full of fear :
And here's a prophet, that I brought with me
From forth the streets of Pomfret, whom I found
With many hundreds treading on his heels ;
To whom he sung, in rude harsh-sounding rhymes,
That, ere the next Ascension-day at noon,
Your Highness should deliver up your crown.

K. John. Thou idle dreamer, wherefore didst thou so?

Peter. Foreknowing that the truth will fall out so.

K. John. Hubert, away with him ; imprison him ;
And on that day at noon, whereon he says
I shall yield up my crown, let him be hang'd.
Deliver him to safety ;¹⁹ and return,
For I must use thee. — [Exit HUBERT with PETER.

O my gentle cousin,

Hear'st thou the news abroad, who are arrived?

Bast. The French, my lord ; men's mouths are full
of it :

Besides, I met Lord Bigot and Lord Salisbury
With eyes as red as new-enkindled fire,
And others more, going to seek the grave
Of Arthur, who, they say, is kill'd to-night
On your suggestion.

K. John. Gentle kinsman, go,
And thrust thyself into their companies :
I have a way to win their loves again ;
Bring them before me.

¹⁹ *Safety for safe-keeping, or custody.*

Bast. I will seek them out.

K. John. Nay, but make haste ; the better foot before.
O, let me have no subjects enemies,
When adverse foreigners affright my towns
With dreadful pomp of stout²⁰ invasion !
Be Mercury, set feathers to thy heels,
And fly like thought from them to me again.

Bast. The spirit of the time shall teach me speed.

K. John. Spoke like a sprightly noble gentleman. —

[*Exit* Bastard.]

Go after him ; for he perhaps shall need
Some messenger betwixt me and the peers ;
And be thou he.

Mess. With all my heart, my liege. [*Exit.*]

K. John. My mother dead !

Re-enter HUBERT.

Hub. My lord, they say five Moons were seen to-night ;
Four fixèd ; and the fifth did whirl about
The other four in wondrous motion.

K. John. Five Moons !

Hub. Old men and beldams in the streets
Do prophesy upon it dangerously :
Young Arthur's death is common in their mouths :
And, when they talk of him, they shake their heads,
And whisper one another in the ear ;
And he that speaks doth gripe the hearer's wrist ;
Whilst he that hears makes fearful action,
With wrinkled brows, with nods, with rolling eyes.
I saw a smith stand with his hammer, thus,

²⁰ *Stout*, here, is *bold, proud*. See page 77, note 4.

The whilst his iron did on the anvil cool,
With open mouth swallowing a tailor's news ;
Who, with his shears and measure in his hand,
Standing on slippers, — which his nimble haste
Had falsely thrust upon contrary feet, —
Told of a many thousand warlike French
That were embattailéd and rank'd in Kent :
Another lean unwash'd artificer
Cuts off his tale, and talks of Arthur's death.

K. John. Why seek'st thou to possess me with these fears?
Why urgest thou so oft young Arthur's death?
Thy hand hath murder'd him : I had a mighty cause
To wish him dead, but thou hadst none to kill him.

Hub. No had,²¹ my lord ! why, did you not provoke me?

K. John. It is the curse of kings to be attended
By slaves that take their humours for a warrant
To break within the bloody house of life ;
And, on the winking of authority,
To understand a law ; to know the meaning
Of dangerous majesty, when perchance it frowns
More upon humour than advised respect.²²

Hub. Here is your hand and seal for what I did.

K. John. O, when the last account 'twixt Heaven and Earth
Is to be made, then shall this hand and seal
Witness against us to damnation !
How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds
Make ill deeds done ! Hadst thou not then been by,

²¹ *No had* is an ancient form of speech, equivalent to *had not*. This appears from various corresponding phrases in old writers, such as *no does*, *no did*, *no will*, &c.

²² *Advised respect* is *deliberate judgment* or *consideration*. See page 86, note 22.

A fellow by the hand of Nature mark'd,
Quoted,²³ and sign'd, to do a deed of shame,
'This murder had not come into my mind :
But, taking note of thy abhorr'd aspect,
Finding thee fit for bloody villainy,
Apt, liable to be employ'd in danger,
I faintly broke with thee of Arthur's death ;
And thou, to be endear'd to a king,
Made it no conscience to destroy a prince.

Hub. My lord, —

K. John. Hadst thou but shook thy head, or made a pause,
When I spake darkly what I purpos'd,
Or turn'd an eye of doubt upon my face,
Or bid me tell my tale in éxpress words,
Deep shame had struck me dumb, made me break off,
And those thy fears might have wrought fears in me :
But thou didst understand me by my signs,
And didst in signs again parley with sin ;
Yea, without stop, didst let thy heart consent,
And consequently thy rude hand to act
The deed, which both our tongues held vile to name.²⁴
Out of my sight, and never see me more !
My nobles leave me ; and my state is braved,

²³ To *note* is among the old meanings of to *quote*. Shakespeare often has it so.

²⁴ There are many touches of nature in this conference of John with Hubert. A man engaged in wickedness would keep the profit to himself, and transfer the guilt to his accomplice. This timidity of guilt is drawn *ab ipsis recessibus*, from the intimate knowledge of mankind ; particularly that line in which he says that to have bid him tell his tale in *express* words would have struck him dumb ; nothing is more certain than that bad men use all the arts of fallacy upon themselves, palliate their actions to their own minds by gentle terms, and hide themselves from their own detection in ambiguities and subterfuges. — JOHNSON.

Even at my gates, with ranks of foreign powers :
Nay, in the body of this fleshly land,
This kingdom, this confine of blood and breath,
Hostility and civil tumult reign
Between my conscience and my cousin's death.

Hub. Arm you against your other enemies,
I'll make a peace between your soul and you.
Young Arthur is alive : this hand of mine
Is yet a maiden and an innocent hand,
Not painted with the crimson spots of blood.
Within this bosom never enter'd yet
The dreadful motion of a murderous thought ;
And you have slander'd nature in my form,
Which, howsoever rude exteriorly,
Is yet the cover of a fairer mind
Than to be butcher of an innocent child.

K. John. Doth Arthur live? O, haste thee to the peers,
Throw this report on their incensèd rage,
And make them tame to their obedience !
Forgive the comment that my passion made
Upon thy feature ; for my rage was blind,
And foul-imaginary eyes of blood
Presented ²⁵ thee more hideous than thou art.
O, answer not ; but to my closet bring
The angry lords with all expedient haste !
I conjure thee but slowly ; run more fast.

[*Exeunt.*

²⁵ *Presented for represented.* Repeatedly so.

SCENE III. — *The Same. Before the Castle.*

Enter, on the walls, ARTHUR, disguised as a Ship-boy.

Arth. The wall is high, and yet will I leap down : —
Good ground, be pitiful, and hurt me not ! —
There's few or none do know me : if they did,
This ship-boy's semblance hath disguised me quite.
I am afraid ; and yet I'll venture it.
If I get down, and do not break my limbs,
I'll find a thousand shifts to get away :
As good to die and go, as die and stay. [*Leaps down.*
O me ! my uncle's spirit is in these stones : —
Heaven take my soul, and England keep my bones ! [*Dies.*

Enter PEMROKE, SALISBURY, and BIGOT.

Sal. Lords, I will meet him at Saint Edmund's-Bury :
It is our safety, and we must embrace
This gentle offer of the perilous time.

Pem. Who brought that letter from the Cardinal ?

Sal. The Count Melun, a noble lord of France ;
Whose private¹ with me of the Dauphin's love
Is much more general than these lines import.

Big. To-morrow morning let us meet him, then.

Sal. Or rather then set forward ; for 'twill be
Two long days' journey, lords, or e'er² we meet.

Enter the Bastard.

¹ *Private* here may mean *secret information* or *personal conference*. But I suspect the text is wrong. See Critical Notes.

² *Or ever* was a common phrase for *before*. See *Tempest*, page 49, note 3.

Bast. Once more to-day well-met, distemper'd³ lords !
The King by me requests your presence straight.

Sal. The King hath dispossess'd himself of us :
We will not line his sin-bestain'd cloak
With our pure honours, nor attend the foot
That leaves the print of blood where'er it walks.
Return and tell him so : we know the worst.

Bast. Whate'er you think, good words, I think, were best.

Sal. Our griefs, and not our manners, reason⁴ now.

Bast. But there is little reason in your grief ;
Therefore 'twere reason you had manners now.

Pem. Sir, sir, impatience hath his privilege.

Bast. 'Tis true, — to hurt his master, no man else.

Sal. This is the prison. What is he lies here ?

[*Seeing ARTHUR.*

Pem. O death, made proud with pure and princely beauty !
The earth had not a hole to hide this deed.

Sal. Murder, as hating what himself hath done,
Doth lay it open, to urge on revenge.

Big. Or, when he doom'd this beauty to a grave,
Found it too precious-princely for a grave.

Sal. Sir Richard, what think you ? Have you beheld,
Or have you read or heard ? or could you think ?
Or do you almost think, although you see,
That you do see ? could thought, without this object,
Form such another ? This is the very top,
The height, the crest, or crest unto the crest,
Of murder's arms : this is the bloodiest shame,

³ *Distemper'd* in the sense of *angry* or *out of temper*. So in *Hamlet*, iii. 2: "The King, sir, is, in his retirement, marvellous *distemper'd*."

⁴ *Reason* for *talk* or *converse*. Often so. See *King Richard III.*, page 178, note 46.

The wildest savagery, the vilest stroke,
That ever wall-eyed⁵ wrath or staring rage
Presented to the tears of soft remorse.⁶

Pem. All murders past do stand excused in this :
And this, so sole and so unmatched,
Shall give a holiness, a purity,
To the yet-unbegotten sins of time ;
And prove a deadly bloodshed but a jest,
Exempl'd by this heinous spectacle.

Bast. It is a damnèd and a bloody work ;
The graceless action of a heavy hand, —
If that it be the work of any hand.

Sal. If that it be the work of any hand !
We had a kind of light what would ensue :
It is the shameful work of Hubert's hand ;
The practice and the purpose of the King :
From whose obedience I forbid my soul,
Kneeling before this ruin of sweet life,
And breathing to his breathless excellence
The incense of a vow, a holy vow,
Never to taste the pleasures of the world,
Never to be infected with delight,
Nor conversant with ease and idleness,
Till I have set a glory to this head,
By giving it the worship of revenge.

⁵ *Wall-eyed* is "having eyes with a white or pale-gray iris, — glaring-eyed, fierce-eyed." So says Dyce; and quotes from Cotgrave "*A Whall, over-white eye. Oeil de chevre.*" And the author of *The Dialect of Craven*, after quoting Shakespeare's "*wall-eyed* wrath," says, "It frequently happens that, when a person is in an excessive passion, a large portion of the white of the eye is visible. This confirms the propriety and force of the above expression."

⁶ *Remorse* is *pity* or *compassion*. Generally so in the Poet's time.

Pem. } Our souls religiously confirm thy words.
Big. }

Enter HUBERT.

Hub. Lords, I am hot with haste in seeking you :
 Arthur doth live ; the King hath sent for you.

Sal. O, he is bold, and blushes not at death :—
 Avaunt, thou hateful villain, get thee gone !

Hub. I am no villain.

Sal. [*Drawing his sword.*] Must I rob the law ?

Bast. Your sword is bright, sir ; put it up again.

Sal. Not till I sheathe it in a murderer's skin.

Hub. Stand back, Lord Salisbury, —stand back, I say ;
 By Heaven, I think my sword's as sharp as yours :
 I would not have you, lord, forget yourself,
 Nor tempt the danger of my true defence ;⁷
 Lest I, by marking of your rage, forget
 Your worth, your greatness, and nobility.

Big. Out, dunghill ! dardest thou brave a nobleman ?

Hub. Not for my life : but yet I dare defend
 My innocent life against an emperor.

Sal. Thou art a murderer.

Hub. Do not prove me so ;⁸
 Yet I am none : whose tongue soe'er speaks false,
 Not truly speaks ; who speaks not truly, lies.

Pem. Cut him to pieces.

Bast. Keep the peace, I say.

Sal. Stand by, or I shall gall you, Falconbridge.

Bast. Thou wert better gall the Devil, Salisbury :

⁷ " True defence " is *honest* defence ; that is, defence in a just cause.

⁸ Meaning, " Do not prove me a murderer by forcing or provoking me to kill you." — *Yet*, in the next line, has the force of *as yet*.

If thou but frown on me, or stir thy foot,
Or teach thy hasty spleen to do me shame,
I'll strike thee dead. Put up thy sword betime ;
Or I'll so maul you and your toasting-iron,
That you shall think the Devil is come from Hell.

Big. What wilt thou do, renowned Falconbridge?
Second a villain and a murderer?

Hub. Lord Bigot, I am none.

Big. Who kill'd this Prince?

Hub. 'Tis not an hour since I left him well :
I honour'd him, I loved him ; and will weep
My date of life out for his sweet life's loss.

Sal. Trust not those cunning waters of his eyes,
For villainy is not without such rheum ;
And he, long traded in it, makes it seem
Like rivers of remorse and innocency.
Away with me, all you whose souls abhor
'Th' uncleanly savours of a slaughter-house ;
For I am stifled with this smell of sin.

Big. Away toward Bury, to the Dauphin there !

Pem. There, tell the King, he may inquire us out.

[*Exeunt* Lords.]

Bast. Here's a good world ! Knew you of this fair work ?
Beyond the infinite and boundless reach
Of mercy, if thou didst this deed of death,
Art thou damn'd, Hubert.

Hub. Do but hear me, sir :—

Bast. Ha ! I'll tell thee what ;
'Thou'rt damn'd as black⁹—nay, nothing is so black ;

⁹ Staunton thinks the Poet may here have had in mind the old religious plays of Coventry, wherein *the damned souls have their faces blackened.*

Thou art more deep damn'd than Prince Lucifer :
There is not yet so ugly a fiend of Hell
As thou shalt be, if thou didst kill this child.

Hub. Upon my soul, —

Bast. If thou didst but consent
To this most cruel act, do but despair ;
And if thou want'st a cord, the smallest thread
That ever spider twisted from her womb
Will serve to strangle thee ; a rush will be a beam
To hang thee on ; or, wouldst thou drown thyself,
Put but a little water in a spoon,
And it shall be as all the ocean,
Enough to stifle such a villain up.
I do suspect thee very grievously.

Hub. If I in act, consent, or sin of thought,
Be guilty of the stealing that sweet breath
Which was embounded in this beauteous clay,
Let Hell want pains enough to torture me !
I left him well.

Bast. Go, bear him in thine arms.
I am amazed, methinks ; and lose my way
Among the thorns and dangers of this world.
How easy dost thou take all England up !
From forth this morsel of dead royalty,
The life, the right, and truth of all this realm
Is fled to Heaven ; and England now is left
To tug and scramble,¹⁰ and to part by th' teeth

Sharp, in his account of these performances, speaking of White and Black Souls, says that these characters are sometimes "denominated *savyd* and *dampnyd Sowles*, instead of white and black."

¹⁰ To *scramble* is much the same as to *ruffle*, to *swagger* ; to carry one's point by turbulence and bravado. See *Much Ado*, page 109, note 7.

Th' unowèd¹¹ interest of proud-swelling state.
 Now for the bare-pick'd bone of majesty
 Doth doggèd war bristle his angry crest,
 And snarleth in the gentle eyes of peace :
 Now powers from home and discontents at home
 Meet in one line ; and vast¹² confusion waits,
 As doth a raven on a sick-fall'n beast,
 The imminent decay of wasted pomp.
 Now happy he whose cloak and cincture¹³ can
 Hold out this tempest. — Bear away that child,
 And follow me with speed : I'll to the king :
 A thousand businesses are brief in hand,
 And Heaven itself doth frown upon the land. [Exeunt.]

 ACT V.

SCENE I. — *Northampton. A Room in the Palace.*

Enter King JOHN, PANDULPH with the crown, and Attendants.

K. John. Thus have I yielded up into your hand
 The circle of my glory.

Pand. [*Giving him the crown.*] Take't again
 From this my hand, as holding of the Pope
 Your sovereign greatness and authority.

¹¹ *Unowèd* for *unowned*. The unowned interest is the interest not now legally possessed by any one.

¹² *Vast* in the sense of the Latin *vastus* ; that is, *empty* or *waste*. Sometimes it appears to mean *wasting* or *devastating* ; as in *King Henry V.*, ii. 3 : "The poor souls for whom this hungry war opens his *vasty* jaws."

¹³ *Cincture* is *belt* or *girdle*.

K. John. Now keep your holy word: go meet the French;

And from his Holiness use all your power
To stop their marches, 'fore we are inflamed.¹
Our discontented counties² do revolt;
Our people quarrel with obedience;
Swearing allegiance and the love of soul
To stranger blood, to foreign royalty.
This inundation of mistemper'd humour
Rests by you only to be qualified:
Then pause not; for the present time's so sick,
That present medicine must be minister'd,
Or overthrow incurable ensues.

Pand. It was my breath that blew this tempest up,
Upon your stubborn usage of the Pope:
But, since you are a gentle convertite,³
My tongue shall hush again this storm of war,
And make fair weather in your blustering land.
On this Ascension-day, remember well,
Upon your oath of service to the Pope,
Go I to make the French lay down their arms. [Exit.]

K. John. Is this Ascension-day? Did not the prophet
Say, that before Ascension-day at noon
My crown I should give off? Even so I have:
I did suppose it should be on constraint;
But, Heaven be thank'd, it is but voluntary.

¹ *Inflamed* here means *on fire* or *in conflagration*; as in Chapman's *Iliad*, book viii.: "We should have made retreate by light of the *inflam'd* fleet."

² *Counties* probably refers not to geographical divisions, but to the peers or nobles; *county* being a common title of nobility.

³ *Convertite* in its old ecclesiastical sense, for one who, having relapsed, has been recovered. See *As You Like It*, page 140, note 31.

Enter the Bastard.

Bast. All Kent hath yielded ; nothing there holds out
But Dover Castle : London hath received,
Like a kind host, the Dauphin and his powers :
Your nobles will not hear you, but are gone
To offer service to your enemy ;
And wild amazement hurries up and down
The little number of your doubtful friends.

K. John. Would not my lords return to me again,
After they heard young Arthur was alive ?

Bast. They found him dead, and cast into the streets ;
An empty casket, where the jewel of life
By some damn'd hand was robb'd and ta'en away.

K. John. That villain Hubert told me he did live.

Bast. So, on my soul, he did, for aught he knew.
But wherefore do you droop ? why look you sad ?
Be great in act, as you have been in thought ;
Let not the world see fear and sad distrust
Govern the motion of a kingly eye :
Be stirring as the time ; be fire with fire ;
Threaten the threatener, and outface the brow
Of bragging horror : so shall inferior eyes,
That borrow their behaviours from the great,
Grow great by your example, and put on
The dauntless spirit of resolution.
Away, and glister like the god of war,
When he intendeth to become the field :
Show boldness and aspiring confidence.
What, shall they seek the lion in his den,
And fright him there, and make him tremble there ?
O, let it not be said ! Forage, and run

To meet displeasure⁴ further from the doors,
And grapple with him ere he come so nigh.

K. John. The legate of the Pope hath been with me,
And I have made a happy peace with him ;
And he hath promised to dismiss the powers
Led by the Dauphin.

Bast. O inglorious league !
Shall we, upon the footing of our land,
Send fair-play offers, and make compromise,
Insinuation, parley, and base truce,
To arms invasive ? shall a beardless boy,
A cocker'd silken wanton,⁵ brave our fields,
And flesh his spirit in a warlike soil,
Mocking the air with colours idly spread,
And find no check ? Let us, my liege, to arms :
Perchance the Cardinal cannot make your peace ;
Or, if he do, let it at least be said
They saw we had a purpose of defence.

K. John. Have thou the ordering of this present time.

Bast. Away, then, with good courage ! yet, I know,
Our party may well meet a prouder foe. [*Excunt.*

⁴ *Displeasure*, to make it harmonize with the context, must here be taken as equivalent to *enmity* or *hostility* ; the sense of the passage being, " Rush forth to hunt and dare the foe, as a hungry lion does to seek his prey." See Critical Notes.

⁵ " A cocker'd silken wanton " is a pampered, finely-tailored milksop. — To *flesh*, as the word is here used, is to *elate*, *embolden*, or *make eager* for fighting ; just as we use *flushed*. The Poet has *fleshment* in the same sense.

SCENE II. — *Near St. Edmund's-Bury. The French Camp.*

Enter, in arms, LOUIS, SALISBURY, MELUN, PEMBROKE, BIGOT, and Soldiers.

Lou. My Lord Melun, let this be copied out,
And keep it safe for our remembrance :
Return the precedent¹ to these lords again ;
That, having our fair order written down,
Both they and we, perusing o'er these notes,
May know wherefore we took the sacrament,
And keep our faiths firm and inviolable.

Sal. Upon our sides it never shall be broken.
And, noble Dauphin, albeit we swear
A voluntary zeal and unurged faith
To your proceedings ; yet, believe me, Prince,
I am not glad that such a sore of time
Should seek a plaster by condemn'd revolt,
And heal th' inveterate canker of one wound
By making many. O, it grieves my soul,
That I must draw this metal from my side
To be a widow-maker ! O, and there
Where honourable rescue and defence
Cries out upon the name of Salisbury !
But such is the infection of the time,
That, for the health and physic of our right,
We cannot deal but with the very hand
Of stern injustice and confus'd wrong. —

¹ The *precedent* is the original draft of the treaty. So, in *King Richard III.*, iii. 6, the Scrivener employed to copy out the indictment of Hastings, says, "Eleven hours I have spent to write it over; the *precedent* was full as long a-doing."

And is't not pity, O my grievèd friends,
 That we, the sons and children of this isle,
 Were born to see so sad an hour as this ;
 Wherein we step after a stranger-march
 Upon her gentle bosom, and fill up
 Her enemies' ranks, (I must withdraw and weep
 Upon the spot of this enforced² cause,)
 To grace the gentry of a land remote,
 And follow unacquainted colours here ?
 What, here ? — O nation, that thou couldst remove !
 That Neptune's arms, who clippeth³ thee about,
 Would bear thee from the knowledge of thyself,
 And grapple thee unto a pagan shore ;
 Where these two Christian armies might combine
 The blood of malice in a vein of league,
 And not to-spend⁴ it so unneighbourly !

Lou. A noble temper dost thou show in this ;
 And great affections wrestling in thy bosom
 Do make an earthquake of nobility.
 O, what a noble combat hast thou fought
 Between compulsion and a brave respect !⁵

² *Spot* is *stain, blot, or disgrace*. Salisbury thinks it, as he well may, a foul dishonour thus to side with the invader of his country ; and the conscience of duty, or the sense of right outraged in the person of Arthur, which compels him to do so, naturally wrings him with grief. A hard alternative indeed ! — *Enforced* is *enforcing* ; another instance of the confusion of active and passive forms. See page 75, note 2.

³ *To clip* is to *encircle* or *embrace*. See *Winter's Tale*, page 159, note 7.

⁴ *To* is here used merely as an intensive prefix. The usage was common, and Shakespeare has it several times.

⁵ Here, as usual, *respect* is *consideration, motive, or inducement*. See page 86, note 22. — *Brave* is *manly, honourable*, and so a fitting epithet of the national feeling which has struggled so hard for the mastery in Salisbury's breast. — *Compulsion* refers to the "*enforcing cause*" mentioned in note 2.

Let me wipe off this honorable dew
That silverly doth progress⁶ on thy cheeks :
My heart hath melted at a lady's tears,
Being an ordinary inundation ;
But this effusion of such manly drops,
This shower, blown up by tempest of the soul,
Startles mine eyes, and makes me more amazed
Than had I seen the vaulty top of heaven
Figured quite o'er with burning meteors.
Lift up thy brow, renownèd Salisbury,
And with a great heart heave away this storm :
Commend these waters to those baby eyes
That never saw the giant world enraged ;
Nor met with fortune other than at feasts,
Full of warm blood, of mirth, of gossiping.
Come, come ; for thou shalt thrust thy hand as deep
Into the purse of rich prosperity
As Louis himself : — so, nobles, shall you all,
That knit your sinews to the strength of mine. —
And even there, methinks, an Angel spake :⁷
Look, where the holy legate comes apace,

⁶ "Shakespeare was guilty, according to cousin Bull, of an unmitigated Americanism in writing this line." So says Mr. White. But I suspect he is a little off the track here. *Progress*, I take it, is a substantive, and *doth* is used as a principal verb, equivalent to *maketh*. So it still remains to be shown that using *progress* as a verb was English in Shakespeare's time.

⁷ This is a strange passage. The Cambridge Editors note upon it as follows : "Surely the close proximity of *purse*, *nobles*, and *angel*, shows that Shakespeare has here yielded to the fascination of a *jeu de mots*, which he was unable to resist, however unsuitable the occasion might be. The Dauphin, we may suppose, speaks *aside*, with an accent and gesture which mark his contempt for the mercenary allies whom he intends to get rid of as soon as may be." It may be needful to add that *noble* and *angel* were names of English coins.

To give us warrant from the hand of Heaven,
And on our actions set the name of right
With holy breath.

Enter PANDULPH, attended.

Pand. Hail, noble Prince of France !
The next is this: King John hath reconciled
Himself to Rome ; his spirit is come in,
That so stood out against the holy Church,
The great metropolis and see of Rome :
Therefore thy threatening colours now wind up ;
And tame the savage spirit of wild war,
That, like a lion foster'd-up at hand,
It may lie gently at the foot of peace,
And be no further harmful than in show.

Lou. Your Grace shall pardon me, I will not back :
I am too high-born to be propertied,⁸
To be a secondary at control,
Or useful serving-man, and instrument,
To any sovereign State throughout the world.
Your breath first kindled the dead coals of war
Between this chástised kingdom and myself,
And brought in matter that should feed this fire ;
And now 'tis far too huge to be blown out
With that same weak wind which enkindled it.
You taught me how to know the face of right,
Acquainted me with interest to⁹ this land,
Yea, thrust this enterprise into my heart ;

⁸ To be used as a *chattel* or a *piece of property*.

⁹ Such language was not uncommon. So in *1 Henry IV.*, iii. 2: "He hath more worthy interest *to* the state than thou." And in Dugdale's *Warwickshire*: "He hath a release from Rose, and all her interest *to* the manor of Pedimore."

And come ye now to tell me John hath made
His peace with Rome? What is that peace to me?
I, by the honor of my marriage-bed,
After young Arthur, claim this land for mine;
And, now it is half-conquer'd, must I back
Because that John hath made his peace with Rome?
Am I Rome's slave? What penny hath Rome borne,
What men provided, what munition sent,
To underprop this action? Is't not I
That undergo this charge? who else but I,
And such as to my claim are liable,
Sweat in this business and maintain this war?
Have I not heard these islanders shout out,
Vive le roi! as I have bank'd their towns?¹⁰
Have I not here the best cards for the game,
To win this easy match play'd for a crown?
And shall I now give o'er the yielded set?
No, on my soul, it never shall be said.

Pand. You look but on the outside of this work.

Lou. Outside or inside, I will not return
Till my attempt so much be glorified
As to my ample hope was promis'd
Before I drew this gallant head of war,
And cull'd these fiery spirits from the world,
To outlook¹¹ conquest, and to win renown
Even in the jaws of danger and of death. [*Trumpet sounds.*

¹⁰ This is commonly explained "sailed along beside their towns upon the rivers' banks"; as we speak of *coasting* or *flanking*. But the cases seem by no means parallel; yet I am not sufficiently booked in card-table language to judge whether Staunton's explanation will hold: "From the context it seems more probably an allusion to card-playing; and by *bank'd their towns* is meant, *won their towns, put them in bank or rest.*"

¹¹ To *outlook* is the same, here, as to *ouface*, or to *face down*.

What lusty trumpet thus doth summon us?

Enter the Bastard, attended.

Bast. According to the fair-play of the world,
Let me have audience ; I am sent to speak : —
My holy lord of Milan, from the King
I come, to learn how you have dealt for him ;
And, as you answer, I do know the scope
And warrant limited unto my tongue.

Pand. The Dauphin is too wilful-opposite,
And will not temporize¹² with my entreaties :
He flatly says he'll not lay down his arms.

Bast. By all the blood that ever fury breathed,
The youth says well. — Now hear our English King ;
For thus his royalty doth speak in me.
He is prepared ; and reason too he should :¹³
This apish and unmannerly approach,
This harness'd masque and unadvised¹⁴ revel,
This unhair'd¹⁵ sauciness and boyish troop,
The King doth smile at ; and is well prepared
To whip this dwarfish war, these pigmy arms,
From out the circle of his territories.
That hand which had the strength, even at your door,
To cudgel you, and make you take the hatch ;¹⁶
To dive, like buckets, in concealèd wells ;

¹² To *temporize* is to comply with the exigencies or the interests of the time ; hence to *yield*, to *come to terms*, to *succumb*.

¹³ " And *there is* reason too *why* he should *be prepared*."

¹⁴ *Harness'd* is *armed*, or *armoured*, or both. — *Unadvised*, again, for *rash*, *inconsiderate*, or *thoughtless*.

¹⁵ *Unhair'd* is *beardless*, *boy-faced*. Spoken in contempt, of course.

¹⁶ To *take* the hatch is to *leap* the hatch. So we speak of *taking* the fence.

To crouch in litter of your stable planks ;
 To lie, like pawns, lock'd up in chests and trunks ;
 To hug with swine ; to seek sweet safety out
 In vaults and prisons ; and to thrill and shake
 Even at the crowing of your nation's cock,¹⁷
 Thinking his voice an armèd Englishman ; —
 Shall that victorious hand be feebled here,
 That in your chambers gave you chastisement ?
 No : know the gallant monarch is in arms ;
 And, like an eagle o'er his eyrie,¹⁸ towers,
 To souse annoyance that comes near his nest. —
 And you degenerate, you ingrate revolts,
 You bloody Neroes, ripping up the womb
 Of your dear mother England, blush for shame :
 For your own ladies and pale-visaged maids,
 Like Amazons, come tripping after drums ;
 Their thimbles into armèd gauntlets changed,
 Their needs to lances, and their gentle hearts
 To fierce and bloody inclination.

Lou. There end thy brave,¹⁹ and turn thy face in peace ;
 We grant thou canst outscold us : fare thee well ;
 We hold our time too precious to be spent
 With such a brabblor.

Pand. Give me leave to speak.

¹⁷ Probably an equivoque was intended here, *gallus* being the name both of a cock and of a Frenchman.

¹⁸ *Eyrie* here is *nest*. Properly it means a young brood in the nest. — To tower was a term in falconry for to *soar*. In the case supposed, an eagle mounts in a spiral course ; and *souse* was used of the swift and deadly plunge which he makes upon the object of his aim, after he has thus soared high above it. *Stoop* was also used of the same act.

¹⁹ *Brave* is *boast*, *vaunt*, or *defiance*. So in *Troilus and Cressida*, iv. 4 :
 " This brave shall oft make thee to hide thy head."

Bast. No, I will speak.

Lou. We will attend to neither. —

Strike up the drums ; and let the tongue of war
Plead for our interest and our being here.

Bast. Indeed, your drums, being beaten, will cry out ;
And so shall you, being beaten : do but start
An echo with the clamour of thy drum,
And even at hand a drum is ready braced
That shall reverberate all as loud as thine ;
Sound but another, and another shall,
As loud as thine, rattle the welkin's ear,
And mock the deep-mouth'd thunder : for at hand —
Not trusting to this halting legate here,
Whom he hath used rather for sport than need —
Is warlike John ; and in his forehead sits
A bare-ribb'd death, whose office is this day
To feast upon whole thousands of the French.

Lou. Strike up our drums, to find this danger out.

Bast. And thou shalt find it, Dauphin, do not doubt.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*The Same. A Field of Battle.*

Alarums. Enter King JOHN and HUBERT.

K. John. How goes the day with us ? O, tell me, Hubert !

Hub. Badly, I fear. How fares your Majesty ?

K. John. This fever, that hath troubled me so long,
Lies heavy on me : O, my heart is sick !

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My lord, your valiant kinsman, Falconbridge,

Desires your Majesty to leave the field,
And send him word by me which way you go.

K. John. Tell him, toward Swinstead, to the abbey there.

Mess. Be of good comfort ; for the great supply,¹
That was expected by the Dauphin here,
Are wreck'd three nights ago on Goodwin Sands.
This news was brought to Richard but even now :
The French fight coldly, and retire² themselves.

K. John. Ah me, this tyrant fever burns me up,
And will not let me welcome this good news !—
Set on toward Swinstead : to my litter straight ;
Weakness possesseth me, and I am faint. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*The Same. Another Part of the Field.*

Enter SALISBURY, PEMBROKE, and BIGOT.

Sal. I did not think the King so stored with friends.

Pem. Up once again ; put spirit in the French :
If they miscarry, we miscarry too.

Sal. That misbegotten devil, Falconbridge,
In spite of spite, alone upholds the day.

Pem. They say King John sore-sick hath left the field.

Enter MELUN wounded, and led by Soldiers.

Mel. Lead me to the revolts of England here.

Sal. When we were happy we had other names.

Pem. It is the Count Melun.

Sal. Wounded to death.

¹ *Supply* here means *reinforcement*, supply of troops. Hence, as a collective noun, it admits both a singular and a plural verb, *was expected* and *Are wreck'd*.

² *Retire* was often thus used transitively, in the sense of *withdraw*.

Mel. Fly, noble English, you are bought and sold ;
Unthread the eye of rude rebellion,³
And welcome home again discarded faith.
Seek out King John, and fall before his feet ;
For, if that France be lord of this loud⁴ day,
He means to recompense the pains you take
By cutting off your heads : thus hath he sworn,
And I with him, and many more with me,
Upon the altar at Saint Edmund's-Bury ;
Even on that altar where we swore to you
Dear amity and everlasting love.

Sal. May this be possible ? may this be true ?

Mel. Have I not hideous death within my view,
Retaining but a quantity of life,
Which bleeds away, even as a form of wax
Resolveth⁵ from his figure 'gainst the fire ?
What in the world should make me now deceive,
Since I must lose the use of all deceit ?
Why should I, then, be false, since it is true
That I must die here, and live hence by truth ?
I say again, if Louis do win the day,
He is forsworn, if e'er those eyes of yours
Behold another day break in the East :

³ Here, if the text be right, the unthreading of a needle is used as a metaphor for simply undoing what has been done. See Critical Notes. — "Bought and sold" is an old proverbial phrase, meaning *played false with*, or *betrayed*.

⁴ *Loud* appears to have been sometimes used in the sense of *stormy* or *boisterous*. So in *Hamlet*, iv. 4 : "My arrows, too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind," &c.

⁵ *Resolveth* for *melteeth* ; as in *Hamlet*, i. 2 : "O, that this too-too solid flesh would melt, thaw, and *resolve* itself into a dew !" See, also, page 65, note 43.

But even this night, — whose black contagious breath
 Already smokes about the burning crest
 Of the old, feeble, and day-wearied Sun, —
 Even this ill night, your breathing shall expire,
 Paying the fine of rated⁶ treachery,
 Even with a treacherous fine of all your lives,
 If Louis by your assistance win the day.
 Commend me to one Hubert, with your King :
 The love of him — and this respect⁷ besides,
 For that my grandsire was an Englishman —
 Awakes my conscience to confess all this.
 In lieu whereof,⁸ I pray you, bear me hence
 From forth the noise and rumour⁹ of the field ;
 Where I may think the remnant of my thoughts
 In peace, and part this body and my soul
 With contemplation and devout desires.

Sal. We do believe thee : — and beshrew my soul
 But I do love the favour and the form
 Of this most fair occasion, by the which
 We will untread the steps of damnèd flight ;
 And, like a bated and retirèd flood,
 Leaving our rankness¹⁰ and irregular course,

⁶ *Rated* perhaps in the sense of the Latin *ratus* ; treason *ratified* by overt act. Johnson, however, explains it, " The Dauphin has *rated* your treachery, and set upon it a *fine* which your lives must pay." — In the next line, *fine* seems to mean *end*, like the Latin *finis*.

⁷ A clear instance of *respect* for *consideration*. See page 128, note 5.

⁸ With Shakespeare, *in lieu of* is always equivalent to *in return for*, or *in consideration of*. See *The Tempest*, page 55, note 6.

⁹ *Rumour* here is *loud murmur*, or *roar*. So in Fairfax's Tasso, vii. 106 : " Of breaking spears, of ringing helm and shield, a dreadful *rumour* roar'd on every side."

¹⁰ *Rankness*, or *rank*, applied to a river, means *overflowing* or *exuberant*.

Stoop low within those bounds we have o'erlook'd,¹¹
And calmly run on in obedience,
Even to our ocean, to our great King John. —
My arm shall give thee help to bear thee hence ;
For I do see the cruel pangs of death
Right in thine eye. — Away, my friends ! New flight ;
And happy newness, that intends old right.

[*Exeunt, leading off* MELUN.

SCENE V. — *The Same. The French Camp.*

Enter LOUIS and his Train.

Lou. The Sun of heaven methought was loth to set,
But stay'd, and made the western welkin blush,
When th' English measured backward their own ground
In faint retire. O, bravely came we off,
When with a volley of our needless shot,
After such bloody toil, we bid good night ;
And wound our tattering¹ colours clearly up,
Last in the field, and almost lords of it !

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Where is my Prince, the Dauphin ?

Lou. Here : what news ?

Mess. The Count Melun is slain ; the English lords,
By his persuasion, are again fall'n off ;
And your supply, which you have wish'd so long,
Are cast away and sunk on Goodwin Sands.

¹¹ *O'erlook'd* for *overflown* or *overpassed*.

¹ *Tattering* for *tattered* ; the active form with the passive sense, as we have before had this order reversed. See page 91, note 5.

Lou. Ah, foul-shrewd² news ! beshrew thy very heart !
 I did not think to be so sad to-night
 As this hath made me. — Who was he that said
 King John did fly an hour or two before
 The stumbling night did part our weary powers ?

Mess. Whoever spoke it, it is true, my lord.

Lou. Well ; keep good quarter and good care to-night :
 The day shall not be up so soon as I,
 To try the fair adventure of to-morrow. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. — *An open Place near Swinstead Abbey.*

Enter, severally, the Bastard and HUBERT.

Hub. Who's there ? speak, ho ! speak quickly, or I shoot.

Bast. A friend. What art thou ?

Hub. Of the part³ of England.

Bast. Whither dost thou go ?

Hub. What's that to thee ?

Bast. Why may not I demand
 Of thine affairs, as well as thou of mine ?
 Hubert, I think ?

Hub. Thou hast a perfect thought :
 I will, upon all hazards, well believe
 Thou art my friend, that know'st my tongue so well.
 Who art thou ?

Bast. Who thou wilt : an if thou please,
 Thou mayst befriend me so much as to think
 I come one way of the Plantagenets.

² *Shrewd* in its old sense of *sharp, biting, or bitter*. Commonly so in Shakespeare. See *As You Like It*, page 140, note 28.

³ *Part* for *party*; as we have before had *party* for *part*. See page 79, note 8.

Hub. Unkind remembrance ! thou and eyeless⁴ night
Have done me shame : — brave soldier, pardon me,
'That any accent breaking from thy tongue
Should 'scape the true acquaintance of mine ear.

Bast. Come, come ; sans compliment, what news abroad ?

Hub. Why, here walk I, in the black brow of night,
To find you out.

Bast. Brief, then ; and what's the news ?

Hub. O, my sweet sir, news fitting to the night,
Black, fearful, comfortless, and horrible.

Bast. Show me the very wound of this ill news :
I am no woman, I'll not swoon at it.

Hub. The King, I fear, is poison'd by a monk :
I left him almost speechless ; and broke out
'T' acquaint you with this evil, that you might
The better arm you to the sudden time,
Than if you had at leisure known of this.⁵

Bast. How did he take it ? who did taste to him ?

Hub. A monk, I tell you ; a resolvèd⁶ villain,
Whose bowels suddenly burst out : the King
Yet speaks, and peradventure may recover.

Bast. Who didst thou leave to tend his Majesty ?

Hub. Why, know you not the lords are all come back,
And brought Prince Henry in their company ?
At whose request the King hath pardon'd them,
And they are all about his Majesty.

⁴ *Eyeless* for *blind*, that is, *dark*. So in Markham's *English Arcadia*, 1607: "O *eyeless* night, the portraiture of death." And Shakespeare, in *Lucrece*, has "*sightless* night." — *Remembrance* here is *memory*, or the faculty of remembering.

⁵ "Than if this knowledge had been withheld from you till the present hurry were over, or till you were more at leisure."

⁶ *Resolved* for *determined* or *resolute*.

Bast. Withhold thine indignation, mighty Heaven,
And tempt us not to bear above our power ! —
I'll tell thee, Hubert, half my power this night,
Passing these flats, are taken by the tide, —
These Lincoln washes have devourèd them ;
Myself, well-mounted, hardly have escaped.
Away, before ! conduct me to the King ;
I doubt ⁷ he will be dead or e'er I come. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII. — *The Orchard of Swinstead Abbey.*

Enter Prince HENRY, SALISBURY, and BIGOT.

P. Hen. It is too late : the life of all his blood
Is touch'd corruptibly ; and his poor brain —
Which some suppose the soul's frail dwelling-house —
Doth, by the idle comments that it makes,
Foretell the ending of mortality.

Enter PEMBROKE.

Pem. His Highness yet doth speak ; and holds belief
That, being brought into the open air,
It would allay the burning quality
Of that fell poison which assaileth him.

P. Hen. Let him be brought into the orchard here. —
Doth he still rage ? [*Exit BIGOT.*

Pem. He is more patient
Than when you left him ; even now he sung.

P. Hen. O vanity of sickness ! fierce extremes
In their continuance will not feel themselves.¹

⁷ *Doubt*, again, for *fear*. See page 101, note 5.

¹ That is, will *lose all sense* of themselves, or become *unconscious*.

Death, having prey'd upon the outward parts,
Leaves them insensible ; and his siege is now
Against the mind, the which he pricks and wounds
With many legions of strange fantasies,
Which, in their throng and press to that last hold,
Confound themselves. 'Tis strange that death should sing.
I am the cygnet to this pale faint swan,
Who chants a doleful hymn to his own death,
And from the organ-pipe of frailty sings
His soul and body to their lasting rest.

Sal. Be of good comfort, Prince ; for you are born
To set a form upon that indigest
Which he hath left so shapeless and so rude.²

Re-enter BIGOT, with Attendants carrying King JOHN in a chair.

K. John. Ay, marry, now my soul hath elbow-room ;
It would not out at windows nor at doors.
There is so hot a summer in my bosom,
That all my bowels crumble up to dust :
I am a scribbled form, drawn with a pen
Upon a parchment ; and against this fire
Do I shrink up.

P. Hen. How fares your Majesty ?

K. John. Poison'd, — ill fare ; — dead, forsook, cast off :
And none of you will bid the Winter come,
To thrust his icy fingers in my maw ;
Nor let my kingdom's rivers take their course
Through my burn'd bosom ; nor entreat the North
To make his bleak winds kiss my parchèd lips,

² So in Ovid's description of Chaos: "Quem dixere Chaos, rudis indigestaque moles."

And comfort me with cold : I do not ask you much,
I beg cold comfort ; and you are so strait,³
And so ingrateful, you deny me that.

P. Hen. O, that there were some virtue in my tears,
That might relieve you !

K. John. The salt in them is hot.
Within me is a hell ; and there the poison
Is, as a fiend, confined to tyrannize
On unreprievable condemnèd blood.

Enter the Bastard.

Bast. O, I am scalded with my violent motion,
And spleen⁴ of speed to see your Majesty !

K. John. O cousin, thou art come to set mine eye :
The tackle of my heart is crack'd and burn'd ;
And all the shrouds, wherewith my life should sail,
Are turnèd to one thread, one little hair :
My heart hath one poor string to stay it by,
Which holds but till thy news be utterèd ;
And then all this thou see'st is but a clod,
And model⁵ of confounded royalty.

Bast. The Dauphin is preparing hitherward,
Where Heaven He knows how we shall answer him ;
For in a night the best part of my power,
As I upon advantage did remove,⁶
Were in the washes all unwarily
Devourèd by the unexpected flood. [*King JOHN dies.*

³ *Strait* for *stingy*, *niggardly*, or *small-souled*.

⁴ *Spleen* was used thus of any *sudden* or *violent* motion. So in ii. 1 of this play: "With swifter *spleen* than *powder* can enforce."

⁵ *Model* here is *image* or *representation*. Repeatedly so.

⁶ To "remove upon advantage" is to move for the purpose or in the hope of gaining an advantage.

Sal. You breathe these dead news in as dead an ear.—
My liege ! my lord !—but now a king, now thus.

P. Hen. Even so must I run on, and even so stop.
What surety of the world, what hope, what stay,
When this was now a king, and now is clay?

Bast. Art thou gone so? I do but stay behind
To do the office for thee of revenge,
And then my soul shall wait on thee to Heaven,
As it on Earth hath been thy servant still.—
Now, now, you stars that move in your right spheres,
Where be your powers? show now your mended faiths ;
And instantly return with me again,
To push destruction and perpetual shame
Out of the weak door of our fainting land.
Straight let us seek, or straight we shall be sought ;
The Dauphin rages at our very heels.

Sal. It seems you know not, then, so much as we :
The Cardinal Pandulph is within at rest,
Who half an hour since came from the Dauphin,
And brings from him such offers of our peace
As we with honour and respect may take,
With purpose presently to leave this war.

Bast. He will the rather do it when he sees
Ourselves well sinewéd to our defence.

Sal. Nay, it is in a manner done already ;
For many carriages he hath dispatch'd
To the sea-side, and put his cause and quarrel
To the disposing of the Cardinal :
With whom yourself, myself, and other lords,
If you think meet, this afternoon will post
To consummate this business happily.

Bast. Let it be so :—and you, my noble Prince,

With other princes that may best be spared,
Shall wait upon your father's funeral.

P. Hen. At Worcester must his body be interr'd ;
For so he will'd it.

Bast. Thither shall it, then :
And happily may your sweet self put on
The lineal state and glory of the land !
To whom, with all submission, on my knee,
I do bequeath my faithful services
And true subjection everlastingly.

Sal. And the like tender of our love we make,
To rest without a spot for evermore.

P. Hen. I have a kind soul that would give you thanks,
And knows not how to do it but with tears.

Bast. O, let us pay the time but needful woe,
Since it hath been beforehand with our griefs.⁷ —
'This England never did, nor never shall,
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
But when it first did help to wound itself.
Now these her princes are come home again,
Come the three corners of the world in arms,
And we shall shock them : nought shall make us rue,
If England to itself do rest but true. [*Exeunt.*

⁷ That is, since the time has prefaced this event with afflictions enough. The speaker thinks they have already suffered so much, that now they ought to give way to sorrow as little as may be.

CRITICAL NOTES.

ACT I., SCENE I.

Page 41. *Why, what a madcap hath Heaven sent us here!* — So Heath and Walker. The original has *lent* instead of *sent*.

P. 41. *With that half-face would he have all my land.* — The original has *half that face*. Corrected by Theobald.

P. 43. *Kneel thou down Philip, but arise more great, —
Arise Sir Richard and Plantagenet.* — Instead of "*arise more great,*" the old text has "*rise more great.*" Corrected by Steevens.

P. 45. *For new-made honour doth forget men's names ;
'Tis too respective and too sociable
For your conversion.* — I suspect we ought to read, with Pope, "*too respective and unsociable For your conversing.*" This makes '*Tis* refer to *honour*, as we should naturally understand it. See, however, foot-note 20.

P. 46. *For he is but a bastard to the time,
That doth not smack of observation.* — The original has *smoake* for *smack*. Hardly worth noting.

ACT II., SCENE I.

P. 49. K. Phi. *Before Angiers well met, brave Austria!* — In the old copies, this and also King Philip's next speech are assigned to Louis. The correction is Theobald's. Mr. W. W. Williams, also, in *The Parthenon*, August 16, 1862, pointed out the error. As he re-

marks, the mere fact of the speaker's saying that Austria "is come hither at *our* importance" is enough to show that the speech should not be assigned to Louis, who is addressed afterwards as a "boy."

P. 52. *With them, a bastard of the king deceased.*—So the second folio. The first has *Kings* instead of *king*.

P. 54. *That Geffrey was thy elder brother born,
And this his son; England was Geffrey's right;
And his is Geffrey's.*—So Mason. The original reads "And *this* is Geffreyes," *this* having got repeated from the line above. I suspect the correction ought to be carried still further, and *Arthur's* substituted for *Geffrey's*: "England was Geffrey's right, and his [right] is Arthur's." See, however, foot-note 18.

P. 54. *From whom hast thou this great commission, France,
To draw my answer to thy articles?*—So Hanmer. Instead of *to*, the original has *from*, which probably crept in from the preceding line.

P. 55. *It lies as sightly on the back of him
As great Alcides' does upon an ass.*—Instead of *does*, the old text has *shoes*, out of which it is hardly possible to make any sense. Theobald substituted *shows*, and has been followed by some editors. The reading in the text was lately proposed by Mr. H. H. Vaughan. It removes all difficulty, and infers an easy misprint. Mr. Fleay retains *shoes*, and substitutes *ape* for *ass*; which may be right.

P. 56. *King Philip, determine what we shall do straight.*
K. Phi. *Women and fools, break off your conference.*—In the first of these lines, the original has "King *Lewis*," and the speech beginning with the second line is there assigned to Louis. The correction is Theobald's.

P. 56. *England and Ireland, Anjou, Touraine, Maine.*—Both here and in one or two other places, the old copy misprints *Angiers* for *Anjou*.

P. 57.

*Thou and thine usurp**The dominations, royalties, and rights**Of this oppress'd boy, thy eld'st son's son,**Infortunate in nothing but in thee.* — So Ritson and Collier's

second folio. The original gives the third line thus : "Of this oppressed boy ; *this* is thy eldest sonnes sonne"; where both sense and metre plead against *this* as an interpolation.

P. 57. *And with her plagued ; her sin his injury ;*

Her injury the beadle to her sin. — In the original this stands as follows :

And with her *plague* her sinne: his injury

Her injury the Beadie to her sinne.

The passage has proved a very troublesome one to dress into order and sense, and is printed variously in modern editions. It is somewhat perplexed and obscure at the best. The change of *plague* to *plagued* in the first line is by Roderick, and removes, I think, a good part of the difficulty. See foot-notes 27 and 28.

P. 59. *All preparation for a bloody siege**And merciless proceeding by these French*

Confront your *city's eyes*. — The original reads "*Comfort yourscities cies.*" Corrected by Rowe.

P. 60. *We will bear home that lusty blood again**Which here we came to spout against your town,**And leave your children, wives, and you in peace.**But, if you fondly pass our proffer'd peace,*

'Tis not the rondure of your old-faced walls, &c. — Instead of "*proffer'd peace,*" the original has "*proffer'd offer*"; which seems to me a plain instance of sophistication, in order to avoid a repetition of *peace*. But I should rather say that the word ought to be repeated here, for peace is precisely what the speaker has just proffered. Walker notes upon the passage thus : "The bad English, the cacophony, and the two-syllable ending, so uncommon in this play, prove that *offer* is a corruption originating in *proffer'd*. Read, I think, *love*." — Instead of *rondure*, in the last line, the old text has *rounder*, which however is but another spelling of the same word.

P. 63. 1 Cit. *Heralds, from off our towers we might behold, &c.* — In the original, this and the following speeches by the same person have the prefix "*Hubert.*" The error — for such it clearly is — probably grew from the two parts of the first Citizen and of Hubert being assigned to the same actor.

P. 63. *Say, shall the current of our right run on?* — So the second folio. Instead of *run*, the first has *rome*; doubtless a misprint for *runne*, the word being commonly so spelt.

P. 63. *Unless thou let his silver waters keep
A peaceful progress to the ocean.* — So Collier's second folio. The original has *water*, instead of *waters*.

P. 64. *You equal-potent, fiery-kindled spirits.* — So Walker. The old text reads "*You equall Potents.*"

P. 64. *A greater Power than ye denies all this.* — Instead of *ye*, the original has *We*. The change was made by Theobald at Warburton's suggestion, and was adopted by Hammer and Capell. The original also prefixes "*Fra.*" to the speech.

P. 65. *King'd of our fears, until our fears, resolved,
Be by some certain king purged and deposcd.* — Such is Tyrwhitt's reading. The old text reads "*Kings of our feare*"; which, if it gives any sense at all, gives a wrong one. The speaker clearly means, that they are ruled by their fears, or their fears are their king, and must continue to be so, until that king is *deposed*.

P. 66. *Our thunders from the south
Shall rain their drift of bullets on this town.* — So Capell. The old text has *Thunder for thunders*. The pronoun *their* points out the correction.

P. 67. *That daughter there of Spain, the Lady Blanch,
Is niece to England.* — Instead of *niece*, the original has *neere*, no doubt a misprint for *neece*, as the word was commonly spelt. The correction is from Collier's second folio, and is fully justified in that the Lady Blanch is repeatedly spoken of as John's niece.

P. 67. *Such as she is, in beauty, virtue, birth,
Is the young Dauphin every way complete :
If not complete, then say he is not she ;
And she, again, wants nothing, to name want,
If want it be, but that she is not he.* — The original has, in the

third of these lines, “If not compleat of,” and, in the last, “If want it be *not*.” The former can hardly be made to yield any sense at all ; and Hanmer changed *of* to *oh*. The context naturally suggests the reading here given : but possibly we ought to read “If not complete *he*, say he is not she.” The other correction was proposed, independently, by Lettson and Mr. Swynfen Jervis. The confounding of *but* and *not* is among the commonest of errors in the originals of Shakespeare. See foot-note 49.

P. 67. *He is the half part of a blessèd man,
Left to be finishèd by such a she.* — The old text reads “such as shee.” Not worth noting, perhaps.

P. 68. *Here's a flaw,
That shakes the rotten carcass of old Death
Out of his rags.* — Here, instead of *flaw*, the original has *stay*, which Collier's second folio changes to *say*. The former seems palpably wrong, and I cannot pronounce *say* much better. Johnson proposed *flaw*, and Walker says it “is indisputably right.” See foot-note 51.

P. 71. *For I am well assured
That I did so when I was first affied.* — Instead of *affied*, the old text repeats *assur'd* ; whereupon Walker notes as follows : “It is impossible that this repetition of the same word in a different sense — there being no quibble intended, or any thing else to justify it — can have proceeded from Shakespeare. Read ‘when I was first *affied*,’ that is, *betrothed*.” See, also, foot-note 56.

P. 72. *Brother of England, how may we content
The widow'd lady ?* — So Collier's second folio. The original has “The *widdowe* Lady.”

P. 73. *It hath drawn him from his own determined aim.* — So Mason and Collier's second folio. The old text has *ayd*.

ACT III., SCENE I.

P. 77. *I will instruct my sorrows to be proud;*

For grief is proud, and makes his owner stout. — Instead of *stout*, the original has *stoope*, which just contradicts the preceding clause. Corrected by Hanmer.

P. 77. *Here I and sorrow sit;*

Here is my throne, bid kings come bow to it. — Here, as in a former line of the same speech, the old text has *sorrowes*. There, however, the plural is in keeping; which is far from being the case here. Corrected by Pope.

P. 79. *What a fool wert thou,*

A ramping fool, to brag, and stamp, and swear,

Upon my party! — The old text reads "What a fool art thou." The context fairly requires the change, which was proposed by Lettsom.

P. 80. *What earthly name to interrogatories*

Can task the free breath of a sacred king? — Instead of *earthly* and *task*, the old text has *earthie* and *tast*, — palpable misprints.

P. 82. *O Louis, stand fast! the Devil tempts thee here*

In likeness of a new-uptrimm'd bride. — The original reads "a new untrimmed Bride." The correction is Dyce's, who aptly quotes, in support of it, from *Romeo and Juliet*, iv. 4: "Go waken Juliet; go and trim her up." Staunton adopts "the happy and unforced emendation of Mr. Dyce." In his *Addenda and Corrigenda*, however, he makes the following note in support of the old reading: "In old times it was a custom for the bride at her wedding to wear her hair unbraided, and hanging loose over her shoulders. May not Constance, by 'a new untrimmed bride,' refer to this custom? Peacham, in describing the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth with the

Palsgrave, says that 'the bride came into the chapell with a coronet of pearle on her head, and *her haire dischevelled* and hanging down over her shoulders.' Compare, too, *Tancred and Gismunda*, v. 1 :

'So let thy tresses flaring in the wind
Untrimmèd hang about thy barèd neck.'

P. 84. *Out of your grace, devise, ordain, impose
Some gentle order ; then shall we be blest*

To do your pleasure, and continue friends. — In the original, the second line reads "Some gentle order, and then we shall be blest." Here *and* hurts the metre without helping the sense ; and so, as Lettson remarks, "seems to have intruded from the line next below."

P. 84. *France, thou mayst hold a serpent by the tongue,*

A chafed lion by the mortal paw, &c. — So Theobald. The original reads "A *cased* Lion," which is absurd. Collier's second folio has "A *caged* lion," which is rather worse than absurd, as the paw of a caged lion may be quite harmless. In support of *chafed*, Dyce quotes from *King Henry VIII.*, iii. 2: "So looks the *chafed* lion upon the daring huntsman that hath gall'd him." Also from Fletcher's *Loyal Subject*, v. 3: "He frets like a *chafed* lion."

P. 84. *For that which thou hast sworn to do amiss*

*Is most amiss when it is truly done ;
And being not done, where doing tends to ill,*

The truth is then most done, not doing it. — In the second of these lines, the original reads "Is *not* amiss"; which, it seems to me, cannot be reconciled to the context, or strained to sense, without a course of argument as over-subtile and intricate as Cardinal Pandulph is here using. Warburton reads "Is *yet* amiss," and Collier's second folio, "Is *but* amiss"; the latter of which also occurred to Lettson. The reading in the text is Hammer's, and is preferable, I think, to either of the others, inasmuch as it just makes a balance between the two branches of the sentence. See foot-note 16.

P. 85. *It is religion that doth make vows kept :*

But thou hast sworn against religion ;

By which thou swear'st against the thing thou swear'st,

*And makest an oath — the surety for thy truth —
 Against an oath, — the test thou art unsure.
 Who swears, swears only not to be forsworn;
 Else what a mockery should it be to swear!*

But thou dost swear only to be forsworn. — A transcriber or compositor or proof-reader might well get lost in such a maze of casuistry as Pandulph weaves in this speech: accordingly, the original here presents an inextricable imbroglio. The third, fourth, fifth, and sixth of the above lines there stand as follows:

*By what thou swear'st against the thing thou swear'st,
 And mak'st an oath the suretie for thy truth,
 Against an oath the truth, thou art unsure
 To sweare, swears onely not to be forsworne."*

In the first of these lines, Capell reads "*By which*," as Johnson suggested; and Hanmer reads "*By that*," as Staunton also proposes to read. In either of these readings the pronoun must be understood as referring, not to *religion*, but to the act expressed in the preceding line. Again, in the last of the lines, *Who swears* is Capell's reading, which Staunton also proposes. In the third line, again, Staunton proposes to substitute *proof* for *truth*. This would be a rather bold change; and I prefer *test*, as a word more likely to be misprinted *truth*. I see no possibility of making any sense out of the passage without some such change; and *test* is repeatedly used by Shakespeare as an equivalent for *proof*. Perhaps we ought also to read *untrue* instead of *unsure*; but *unsure* may well be taken in much the same sense as *untrue*, — *not to be relied on*, or *untrustworthy*. Some of the strainings and writhings of exegetical ingenuity that have been resorted to in support of the old text are ludicrous enough. See foot-note 18.

P. 87. *A rage whose heat hath this condition,*

That nothing can allay't, nothing but blood, —

The best and dearest-valued blood of France. — Here the old text has *allay* instead of *allay't*, and *blood* instead of *best*. The former change is Capell's, the latter Walker's. Perhaps it were as well to read "*The blood, the dearest-valued blood of France.*"

ACT III., SCENE 2.

P. 88. *Now, by my life, this day grows wondrous hot ;*

Some fiery devil hovers in the sky,

And pours down mischief. — So Theobald and Collier's second folio. The original, "Some *ayery* Devill." Burton, in his *Anatomie of Melancholy*, says that, of the sublunary devils, "Prellus makes six kinds: fiery, aeriall, terrestriall, watery, and subterranean devils, besides those faeries, satyres, nymphs," &c. — "Fiery spirits or devills are such as commonly work by blazing starres, fire-drakes, or *ignes fatui*; likewise they counterfeit sunnes and moones, stars oftentimes, and sit on ship masts," &c.

P. 88. *Hubert, keep thou this boy.* — So Tyrwhitt. The original lacks *thou*.

ACT III., SCENE 3.

P. 88. *So shall it be ; your Grace shall stay behind,*

More strongly guarded. — Instead of *More*, the old text has *So*; probably repeated by mistake from the line before. The correction is Lettsom's.

P. 89. *And, ere our coming, see thou shake the bags*

Of hoarding abbots ; set at liberty

Imprison'd angels : the fat ribs of peace

Must by the hungry war be fed upon. — In the original "set at liberty" and "imprison'd angels" change places with each other, thus untuning the verse badly. The correction is Walker's. The original also reads "Must by the hungry *now* be fed upon." Warburton proposed and Theobald printed *war*.

P. 90. *I had a thing to say, —*

But I will fit it with some better time. — The original has *tune*, — a frequent misprint for *time*. Corrected by Pope.

P. 90. *If the midnight bell*

Did, with his iron tongue and brazen mouth,

Sound one into the drowsy ear of night. — The original reads "Sound *on* into the drowsie *race* of night." Shakespeare has many

clear instances of *one* printed *on*, which was in fact a common way of spelling *one*. Theobald was the first to see that here *on* was merely the old spelling of *one*. The correction of *race* to *car* is Walker's. Such a misprint was very easy when *car* was spelt *care*. See footnote 4.

P. 91. *Hubert shall be your man, t' attend on you.*—So the third folio. The original reads “your man, *attend on you*.”

ACT III., SCENE 4.

P. 92. *A whole armado of convented sail*
Is scatter'd and disjoin'd from fellowship.—So Mason and Collier's second folio. The original has “*convicted sail*.”

P. 92. *Such temperate order in so fierce a course*
Doth want example.—The old text has *cause* instead of *course*, which was conjectured by Theobald and printed by Hamner. So, in *Macbeth*, v. 2, the old copies have *cause* misprinted for *course*: “He cannot buckle his distemper'd *cause* within the belt of rule.”

P. 93. *And rouse from sleep that fell anatomy*
Which cannot hear a lady's feeble voice,
Which scorns a mother's invocation.—So Heath and Collier's second folio. The old text has “a *modern invocation*.” Heath observes, “The epithet *modern* hath no meaning in this place. We should undoubtedly read ‘And scorns a *mother's* invocation.’” Probably it was written *moders*.

P. 93. *Thou art unholy to belie me so.*—So Staunton. The original reads “Thou art *holy*,” against both sense and verse. The fourth folio has “*not holy*,” which is the common reading.

P. 95. *As dim and meagre as an ague-fit.*—The original reads “an *Agues fitte*.” In support of *ague-fit*, Lettsom appositely quotes from *King Richard II.*, iii. 2: “This *ague-fit* of fear is overblown.”

P. 96. *And bitter shame hath spoil'd the sweet world's taste,
That it yields nought but shame and bitterness.* — So Pope.
The old text, “sweet words taste.” — The repetition of *shame* seems hardly right. Walker proposes “nought but *gall* and bitterness,” and remarks that “something is wanting that shall class with *bitterness*.”

P. 97. *And it cannot be,
That, whiles warm life plays in that infant's veins,
The misplaced John should entertain one hour,
One minute, nay, one quiet breath of rest.* — Instead of *one* in the third line, the original has *an*. Obvious as is the correction, it was not made till found in Collier's second folio.

P. 98. *No natural exhalation in the sky,
No scape of nature, no distemper'd day, &c.* — The old text has *scope* for *scape*. Corrected by Pope. Dr. Schmidt denounces the correction as “preposterous”; and glozes the old text into meaning “no effect produced within the regular limits of nature.” His denunciation would have stood a better chance, if he had spared his explanation: as it is, the gloss amply nonsuits the censure, and reacts in support of the correction. Such freaks of exegetical license can make you any thing out of any thing, and read you whatever sense you please into *abracadabra*. See foot-note 17.

P. 99. *Strong reasons make strong actions.* — So the second folio. The first reads “*strange* actions.” I am not sure that the change is a correction; though the repetition of *strong* is much in Shakespeare's manner

ACT IV., SCENE I.

P. 100. SCENE I. *Northampton.* — The old copies have nothing indicating the whereabouts of this scene. Modern editors generally have settled upon Northampton, though for no reason, apparently, but that the course of the dialogue identifies that as the whereabouts of the opening scene. Here the course of the dialogue merely shows the scene to be somewhere in England; and perhaps Northampton may answer as well for the whereabouts here, as in the first Act. In fact, however, Arthur, after falling into John's hands, was confined in the

castle of Falaise, and afterwards in that of Rouen, where he was put to death. Perhaps I ought to add that Staunton and the Cambridge Editors assign "*A Room in a Castle*" as the place of Arthur's confinement, without further specifying the whereabouts; to which I can see no objection, except that Northampton was the ordinary place of the Court in John's time; but that is not much.

P. 100. *Heat me these irons hot; and look you stand*

Within the arras.—The original reads "look *thou* stand." But Hubert is addressing the *two* Attendants, and the occurrence of *you* in the third line below shows that it should be *you* here. Corrected by Rowe.

P. 101. *I should be merry as the day is long.*—In the original, "be *as* merry as the day." The first *as* overfills the verse without helping the sense. Pope's correction.

P. 103. *And quench his fiery indignation*

Even in the water of mine innocence.—The original has *this* instead of *his*, and *matter* instead of *water*. The former correction is very obvious, as we have many instances of *his* and *this* misprinted for each other; the latter is due to Mr. W. W. Williams, and is exceedingly happy.

P. 103. *But for containing fire to harm mine eyes.*—Both here and afterwards, in the line of Hubert's speech, "Well, see to live; I will not touch thine *eyes*," the original has *eye*,—errors easily corrected from the context.

P. 104. *There is no malice burning in this coal.*—The old text reads "no malice *in this burning coal*." As Arthur has just said "the fire is *dead*," the transposition seems but just to the sense of the passage.

ACT IV., SCENE 2.

P. 107. *And more, more strong, when lesser is my fear,*

I shall endue you with.—Instead of *when*, the old text has *then*. Corrected by Tyrwhitt.

P. 107. *Both for myself and them, but, chief of all,
Your safety, for the which myself and they
Bend their best studies.*—The original reads “for the which
myself and *them*.” Corrected by Pope. Walker notes, upon the pas-
sage, “Is it possible that Shakespeare should have written so ungram-
matically? *they*, surely.”

P. 108. *If what in rest you have, in right you hold,
Why should your fears—which, as they say, attend
The steps of wrong—then move you to mew up
Your tender kinsman.*—So Pope and Collier’s second folio.
In the old text, *should* and *then* change places with each other.

P. 109. *Like heralds ’twixt two dreadful battles sent.*—So Theobald.
The original has *set* for *sent*. As *battles* here means *armies drawn up
in order of battle*, I do not see how heralds can be said to be *set*
between them. That heralds should be *sent* to and fro between them,
for the purpose of arranging a composition, is intelligible enough.

P. 111. *Where is my mother’s ear,
That such an army could be drawn in France,
And she not hear of it?*—This is commonly printed “my
mother’s *care*.” In the original *eare* has the first letter so blemished
as to be hardly distinguishable from a *c*.

P. 111. *Under whose conduct come those powers of France
That thou for truth givest out are landed here?*—The original
has *came* for *come*. Corrected by Hanmer.

P. 113. *O, let me have no subjects enemies, &c.*—So the second folio.
The first has *subject* instead of *subjects*.

P. 114. *How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds
Make ill deeds done! Hadst thou not then been by,
This murder had not come into my mind.*—The original reads
“Make *deeds* ill done? Had’st *not thou* been by.” The first correc-
tion was proposed by Capell, and is made in Collier’s second folio; the
other is Lettsom’s. Pope reads “*for* hadst not thou.”

P. 115. *Hadst thou but shook thy head, or made a pause,
Or turn'd an eye of doubt upon my face,
Or bid me tell my tale in éxpress words.* — So Pope and Collier's second folio. The old text, "*As bid me tell.*"

ACT IV., SCENE 3.

P. 117. *Whose private with me of the Dauphin's love
Is much more general than these lines import.* — Collier's second folio reads "*Whose private missive,*" and rightly, perhaps.

P. 118. *We will not line his sin-bestain'd cloak
With our pure honours.* — So Collier's second folio. The old copies have "*his thin-bestained cloake.*"

P. 119. *To the yet unbegotten sins of time.* — The original reads "*sinne of times.*" Corrected by Pope.

P. 119. *Till I have set a glory to this head,
By giving it the worship of revenge.* — So Farmer and Collier's second folio. The old text, "*a glory to this hand.*"

P. 123. *Now happy he whose cloak and cincture can
Hold out this tempest.* — The original has *center* instead of *cincture*. An obvious error, and hardly worth noting.

ACT V., SCENE 1.

P. 123. K. John. *Thus have I yielded up into your hand
The circle of my glory.*

Pand. [Giving him the crown.] *Take't again
From this my hand.* — The old text reads "*Take again.*" The correction is Lettsom's. Strange it should have been so long in coming.

P. 125. *What, shall they seek the lion in his den,
And fright him there, and make him tremble there?
O, let it not be said! Forage, and run*

To meet displeasure further from the doors. — Collier's second folio substitutes *Courage!* for *Forage*, and, I suspect, rightly; as, at the close of the scene, the same speaker says, "Away, then, with good *courage!*" The old text seems indeed to be sustained by several quotations showing that *lion* and *forage* were apt to be used together. So in *King Henry V.*, i. 2: "Smiling to behold his *lion's* whelp *forage* in blood of French nobility." Also in Chapman's *Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois*, ii. 1: "And look how lions close kept, fed by hand, lose quite th' innative fire of spirit and greatness that lions, free, breathe, *foraging* for prey; and grow so gross, that mastiffs, curs, and mongrels, have spirit to cow them." Still I am not sure that the argument from these passages will fairly cover the case in hand; as it is the spirit of resistance and defence, not of conquest, that Falconbridge is trying to kindle in John.

P. 126. *Shall we, upon the footing of our land,
Send fair-play offers, and make compromise?* — So Collier's second folio. The original has "*fayre-play-orders.*"

ACT V., SCENE 2.

P. 127. *And, noble Dauphin, albeit we swear
A voluntary zeal and unurg'd faith
To your proceedings; &c.* — The old text reads "and *an unurg'd* faith."

P. 127. *Should seek a plaster by condemn'd revolt.* — The original has *contemn'd*; upon which Heath notes as follows: "The epithet *contemn'd* hath no propriety here. We should certainly read *condemn'd*; that is, which the general voice of mankind condemns, and which therefore Salisbury himself cannot help deploring."

P. 128. *And grapple thee unto a pagan shore.* — The old copies have *cripple*. Corrected by Pope.

P. 128. *O, what a noble combat hast thou fought
Between compulsion and a brave respect.* — In the first of these lines, the original omits *thou*, which was supplied in the fourth folio.

P. 129. *Full of warm blood, of mirth, of gossiping.*—The old copies read “Full *warm* of blood.” Corrected by Heath.

P. 130. *Your breath first kindled the dead coals of war.*—The original has “*coale of warres.*” The correction is Capell’s.

P. 132. *The Dauphin is too wilful-opposite,
And will not temporize with my entreaties.*—Hereupon Walker notes as follows: “The double ending in this play grates on my ear. Read, surely, *entreats*; the mistake was easy. The word is frequent.” And he cites examples of *entreats*, substantive, from various sources; also several examples of *entreaties*, where it is clearly an erratum for *entreats*. Still the change seems inadmissible.

P. 132. *This unhair’d sauciness and boyish troop
The King doth smile at; and is well prepared
To whip this dwarfish war, these pigmy arms.*—Here the original has, in the first line, “This *un-heard* sawcinesse and boyish *Troopes*,” and, in the third, “*this* Pigmy *Armes*.” The first of these corrections, *unhair’d*, was made by Theobald; the second, *troop*, was conjectured independently by Capell, Lettsom, and Jervis. The third error corrects itself.

P. 133. *Even at the crowing of your nation’s cock.*—So Collier’s second folio. The old text, “Even at the *crying* of your Nations *crow*.” See foot-note 17.

P. 133. *Their thimbles into armèd gauntlets changed,
Their neelds to lances, &c.*—Instead of *changed* and *neelds*, the original has *change* and *Needl’s*. The confounding of final *e* and *d* is very frequent, as Walker abundantly shows. For *neelds*, see note on “Is all the counsel that we two have shared,” &c., vol. iii. page 100.

ACT V., SCENE 4.

P. 136. *Unthread the eye of rude rebellion,
And welcome home again discarded faith.
Seek out King John, and fall before his feet;
For, if that France be lord of this loud day,*

He means to recompense the pains you take

By cutting off your heads : thus hath he sworn, &c. — In the first of these lines, the old text reads “the *rude eye of Rebellion*.” But *rude* should evidently be taken as an epithet of *rebellion*, not of *eye*. Theobald’s reading of the line is, “*Untread the rude way of rebellion*”; which I am strongly moved to adopt. Collier’s second folio reads “*Untread the road-way*.” Either of these might be supported by the line in the last speech of the scene: “We will *untread* the steps of damnèd flight.” See, however, foot-note 3. — In the fourth line, again, the original has “For if *the French be Lords*.” The reading here given was suggested by Walker, who notes upon the old text as follows: “Palpably wrong. Did Shakespeare write ‘if *that France be lord*,’ &c.? or is a line lost? e. g.,

Seek out King John, and fall before his feet ;
[Confide not in the plighted faith of Lewis’
For, if, &c.”

P. 138. *For I do see the cruel pangs of death*

Right in thine eye. — *Right* sounds rather odd here, though common speech often uses it in much the same way, as in the phrases, “He caught me *right* here,” “I hit him *right* in the eye,” &c. Collier’s second folio substitutes *Bright*: plausible, indeed; but Dyce puts it right out of court, on the authority of an “eminent physician,” Dr. Elliotson: “Mr. Collier tells us that *Bright* is to be understood ‘in reference to the remarkable brilliancy of the eyes of many persons just before death’: but if that lighting up of the eye ever occurs, it is only when comparative tranquillity precedes dissolution, — not during ‘the *pangs* of death’; and most assuredly it is never to be witnessed in those persons who, like Melun, are dying of wounds — *of exhaustion from loss of blood*, — in which case, the eye, immediately before death, becomes glazed and lustreless.” — Capell reads “*Fight* in thine eye”; and the same occurred to me before I knew that any one had hit upon it. I have hardly any doubt that so we ought to read; for the image or idea of death-pangs combating in the eye, and striving to quench its native fire, is good sense and good poetry too. Perhaps I should add, that Mr. A. E. Brae proposes, and Dr. Ingleby strongly approves, the reading, “*Riot* in thine eye.” This, besides that it makes the verse begin with a Dactyl, — a rare thing in Shakespeare, — does not

seem to me so good in itself as Capell's *Fight*. Dr. Schmidt explains *Right* to mean "in a manner deserving the name"; which, to my thinking, has much the effect of putting the old text out of court.

ACT V., SCENE 5.

P. 138. *But stay'd, and made the western welkin blush,
When th' English measured backward their own ground
In faint retire.* — The original reads "When English *measure* backward." Corrected by Rowe and Pope.

P. 138. *And wound our tattering colours clearly up.* — The original has "And *woon'd* our *tott'ring* colours." But *tottering*, it appears, is but an old spelling of *tattering*. See foot-note 1. — Much question has been made about *clearly* here; whether it be the right word, and, if so, in what sense it is to be taken, *neatly* or *entirely*. Capell proposed *cheerly*, and Collier's second folio substitutes *closely*. The Cambridge Editors propose *cleanly* in the sense of *neatly*, and as rightly antithetical to *tattering*.

ACT V., SCENE 6.

P. 139. Hub. *What's that to thee?*

Bast.

Why may not I demand

Of thine affairs, as well as thou of mine?

Hubert, I think. — The original prints all this as Hubert's speech, except "Hubert, I think," to which it prefixes "*Bast.*" The arrangement in the text is Dyce's, who notes upon it as follows: "Here I adopt, as absolutely necessary, a portion of the new distribution of the speeches at the commencement of this scene which was recommended to me by Mr. W. W. Lloyd."

P. 140. *Unkind remembrance! thou and eyeless night*

Have done me shame. — So Theobald and Collier's second folio.

The original, "thou and *endles* night." See foot-note 4.

ACT V., SCENE 7.

P. 142. *Death, having prey'd upon the outward parts,
Leaves them insensible; and his siege is now
Against the mind.*—The original has *invisible* for *insensible*.
Corrected by Hanmer. The original also has *winde* for *mind*; an
error that corrects itself.

P. 142. *I am the cygnet to this pale faint swan.*—For *cygnet* the
old text has *Symet*. Corrected by Rowe.

P. 145. *I have a kind soul that would give you thanks.*—The old
copies omit *you*, which is necessary alike to sense and metre.

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